



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

CHINA PRAYER LETTER



OCTOBER 2019

Dying for Immortality

In 1964, Robert Ettinger, son of Russian Jewish immigrants to America, published 'The Prospect of Immortality'. The book enthused many to believe that human cryopreservation could be achieved, and that future science might resurrect the frozen bodies and restore them to health and even youthfulness. Ettinger subsequently founded the non-profit Cryonics Institute.

Ettinger's book was written 10 years after frozen semen was successfully used to inseminate three women. And in 1967 Dr. James Bedford became the first human to be cryopreserved. His corpse is currently stored with the California-based Alcor Life Extension Foundation. Since then vitrification (freezing to a glass like state) and transplant of embryos has been successfully developed and commercialised. However, applying the process to entire organs has only had limited success. In 2002, a vitrified rabbit kidney was thawed and transplanted into a rabbit.



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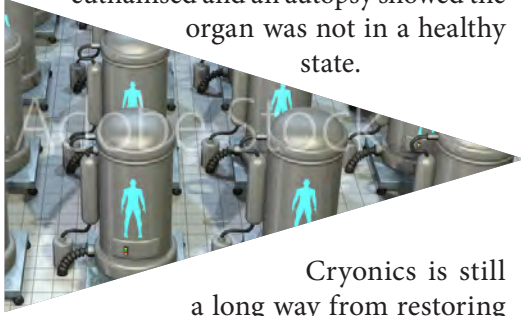
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Seeking to serve, strengthen and support the church and the people of China

The rabbit lived for 48 days before being euthanised and an autopsy showed the organ was not in a healthy state.



Cryonics is still a long way from restoring human life, but it does seem that 'buying time' could become a lucrative business. Until 2017 only the USA and Russia had facilities to provide human cryopreservation and in America prices today vary from \$28,000 to \$200,000 between the different organisations.

And if money is a barrier to obtaining your future resurrection, then insurance can be purchased to cover the cost.

Now China has joined the countries offering the service. Alcor Life Extension Foundation assisted China's Yinfeng Biological Group, a private company, to undergo China's first cryopreservation procedure. Zhan Wenlian, aged 49, died from lung cancer in May 2017, and had expressed a desire to donate her body to science. She was "volunteered" posthumously by her husband as China's first 'patient'.

When a body freezes ice crystals form in the cells, damaging them. To minimize this damage during the cryonic procedure the body's blood supply is replaced

with antifreeze compounds and organ preservatives. It then undergoes a cooling process and is immersed in liquid nitrogen for storage indefinitely. The cryostats, or storage vessels, do not require electricity.

China's second patient, a 72-year-old woman underwent the procedure in June last year. Immediately on being declared clinically dead in Tai'an Central Hospital, Shandong province, her corpse was placed on life support to protect her organs. She was taken 100km by ambulance to complete the process at Yinfeng's facilities in Jinan.

With traditional burial in China now illegal, it is credible to expect that cryonic burials would receive interest. Although if they become popular, and include favourite pets and prized animals, they will also present a challenge for storage space. 28% of China is desert. Without the need for power to store cryostats is it possible that this could be utilised?

China's human cryopreservation industry will require a legal framework and regulation, none of which is currently in place. In France, human bodies may only be legally disposed of by burial, cremation, and formal donation to science. However, they may be shipped to other countries for cryonic freezing.

There is no doubt that despite China's official status as an atheist nation, there is still widespread belief in an afterlife. Among China's 1.39 billion souls just over half claim they are not affiliated to any of the five 'officially sanctioned' religions.

Yet, it seems even these unaffiliated ones hold a hope that life might continue after death. According to a 2010 Pew Research Center report, 44% of religiously unaffiliated Chinese had taken part in ancestor worship at a graveside or tomb

in the past year. Practitioners of folk religions are not recorded.

Despite the hardships and struggles of life, many people hold a desire to live forever, and a hope for a better life.

Hong Kong Protests



Hong Kong was first ceded to Britain in the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 after the First Opium War. In 1898, under the Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory, the New Territories and outlying islands were leased for 99 years. Under British law, the Hong Kong people came to enjoy freedom of religion and the value of freedom. The 99-year lease expired in 1997 and Hong Kong was returned to China. To reassure the people of Hong Kong, a Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed prior to the handover. This laid out that Hong Kong would operate as a 'special administrative region' under a 'One Country Two Systems' arrangement.

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The Joint Declaration stated, "The current social and economic systems in Hong Kong will remain unchanged, and so will the life-style. Rights and freedoms, including those of the person, of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of travel, of movement, of correspondence, of strike, of choice of occupation, of academic research and of religious belief will be ensured by law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region [HKSAR]. Private property, ownership of enterprises, legitimate right of inheritance and foreign investment will be protected by law."

It also stated that, "The Government of the HKSAR will be composed of local inhabitants. The chief executive will be appointed by the Central People's Government on the basis of the results of elections or consultations to be held locally."

These, and other Joint Declaration policies, were encapsulated into a Basic Law which was to remain unchanged for 50 years after 1997. However, Hong Kong has since witnessed some erosion to the Basic Law, as when Beijing began screening candidates for the Chief executive position prior to elections as a means of protecting itself from separatist threats.

Earlier this year Hong Kong's citizens again became concerned over a bill that would further erode their rights under the Basic Law. Ongoing protests were staged with huge gatherings of people, demanding the retraction

of a proposed 'Extradition Bill'. This bill, if passed, would allow China to extradite suspects, including activists and political dissidents (both Hong Kong or Mainland citizens) to the Mainland to face trial and possible imprisonment there. The bill was suspended after a lengthy 2 months of protests, but Hong Kong residents feared it would simply be presented later in the year. They continued to protest. Finally, on 5th September the bill was withdrawn.

The extradition bill had Hong Kong residents alarmed as laws such as 'subverting state power' and 'sharing state secrets' are frequently used in China to accuse dissidents and activists with crimes that carry serious penalties. Christians were rightly concerned as these charges have been used against Christian leaders in China who speak out against the persecution of the church.

Hong Kong is a strategic location for those supporting the Chinese Church. Teaching materials, Bibles and literature, in many languages spoken on the Mainland, are legally printed there and warehoused for distribution into China where religious material is restricted. A number of mission organisations are based there to reach out to Chinese visitors and those across the border.

If protests were to escalate into anarchy and violence, the freedoms and privileges inscribed in the Basic Law could be

jeopardised. There are many reasons to pray for peace in Hong Kong.

The Puroik – A New Name

In Tibetan the word “Lhoba” means “Southerners”. It is the name the Tibetans give to the clans living in the southeast of China’s Tibet Autonomous Region. They make up China’s smallest minority group with just 4000 people. The Lhoba Minority includes a number of tribes with different languages and dialects - none of whom have their own written language. The Tibetans traditionally viewed the Lhoba as inferior and banned intermarriage with them.

There are around 40,000 Lhobas across the border in India’s Arunachal Pradesh Province. There, they are mainly known as Apatani.

One distinct tribe listed under the Lhoba Minority is the Sulung People. This group had for centuries been slaves to the Bangni (Nyishi) clan. According to oral history, their ancestor could not meet his debts placing him and subsequent generations into servitude. The name Sulung means “slave or servant” in the Nyishi language.

Despite their low status they were generally treated well by their masters.



They often had their own self-contained quarters in the household and a master might even fund the heavy bride price for his slave when he chose to marry. But for those that were classed as bonded servants, borrowing just placed them further in debt.

Because they served other tribes most Sulung are bilingual or multilingual. But almost all use their own language in their daily communication within the tribe.

Since their region came under Chinese Communist Party rule it has become illegal to own a slave and the Sulungs chose to change their name to Puroik, meaning “People” as Sulung implied a derogatory meaning.

Their language is highly distinctive. It was initially assumed to be a member of the Sino-Tibetan family, like those of most neighbouring groups, but now it is thought to be either a variant of the Austroasiatic family (which includes Khmer and Vietnamese), or is very



and ancestor worship.

China's modernisation is radiating to its extremities, connecting the Puroik with the rest of China. Education, infrastructure and roads are now provided, and tourism is being promoted. Lhoba costumes, music and culture have been tailored for tourist shows and bring income to the villages. Puroik have been allocated land and are adopting basic forms of agriculture. Rare earth minerals deposits valued at over \$60 billion have been discovered in Longzi County and in 2018, the

Chinese government initiated large-scale investment into mining precious metals like gold and silver in this border region. The subsequent gold rush has led to an influx of people.

likely a linguistic isolate. This could allude to a pre-Tibeto-Burman, Tai and Indo-Aryan past.

Puroik are renowned as skilled hunter-gatherers. Bare foot they hunt with bow and arrow in the subalpine Himalayan forests abundant with wildlife like pheasants, tigers, bears, leopards, snow leopards, snakes, goats, antelopes and boars. The area forms part of the region traditionally called Pemako, known both for its wild beauty and its extreme isolation.

Neighbouring the area is the Indian Province of Arunachal Pradesh. It is claimed by both China and India, but currently is governed by India. Tensions between the nations are high. Sadly, the Puroik communities have been divided by the dispute. Around 500 live within China and 10,000 in India. There are a handful of known Puroik Christians on the Indian side of the border, but none in Chinese territory.

The Puroik venerate the sun and moon (Donyi-Polo) and have ancient creation myths concerning them. They pay homage to a complex hierarchy of spirits, gods, and ghosts. For them certain natural objects can carry a divine presence and spiritual energy can be transmitted between humans and objects. Their beliefs are also influenced by elements of Buddhism, Taoism

Unfortunately, Puroik are amongst the most backward and illiterate of India's communities and the struggle against bonded labour, particularly among vulnerable women, is still an ongoing work. Much is being done to raise their standard of living.

PRAYER POINTERS

Dying For Immortality

Thank God that we do have a hope for eternal life and restoration of our bodies. [John 3:16]

Pray that Christians will be ready to discuss the gift of eternal life and can explain why we can be sure of our hope in Christ.

Thank God that he has a plan to end the damage sin has made to this fallen world.

Hong Kong Protests

Thank God that the Extradition Law has been withdrawn.

Pray for peace in Hong Kong.

Pray for wisdom for Carrie Lam, Xi Jinping and the other leaders involved in resolving the conflicts in Hong Kong.

Pray that Hong Kong will remain a place of religious freedom and tolerance.

Pray that this will last long beyond the 50 years Law promised under the Joint Declaration.

The Puroik - A New Name

Pray for peaceful resolution between India and China that will allow the Indian Puroik to visit their fellow tribes across the border and to share the gospel with them in their own language.

Thank God that modernisation is making a way for the gospel to reach these isolated communities.

Pray that Puroik will be able to use technology to learn about the true creation story.

Pray that the new work opportunities with Longzi County's mining operations will also bring Christians to live there.

Pray that God will bless radio ministries that broadcast to the illiterate peoples of this region in their own language.

PRAYER POINTERS

Signing Up For The Bible

Thank God for the good work that Amity Printing Co. and the United Bible Societies have done to provide Bibles for the Chinese Church. Pray that greater transparency will be provided to UBS supporters in the future.

Thank Jesus that he came not to free Israel from the Romans but to offer the whole World freedom from the bondage of sin. Pray that the Global Year of the Bible will truly reflect the unity, freedom and development that God desires.

Pray that the AD 2020 Global Year of the Bible will encourage support for the language and translation projects still waiting to be completed in China.

Pray for new and safe ways for the underground church to access the Bible and that those in prison will also be able to find comfort in the word of God.

The Veracity Of The Scriptures

Pray for the Chinese translators and interpreters who will be working on the new sinicised Bible translation. Pray that they will be led by the Holy Spirit and will be obedient to Him.

Pray that any perversion of the truth will not succeed, that it will be revealed, and that believers will be warned and not deceived.

Thank God that for His divine Word and for the promises it contains.

UBS Letter of Assurance

Pray for the team working on the Biblical interpretation and notes of the new sinicised Bible. Pray that they will help those who live in the context of Chinese culture and to get a full and correct understanding of the scriptures.

Pray that this new translation will increase the desire of Chinese believers to read and know the Word, as they compare with other translations.

Pray for the United Bible Societies (UBS) who are a Christian organisation yoked with a state-run church under an atheist government. Pray that they will be uncompromising in their faithfulness to the Word and to Christ.

Pray for the Chinese Government leadership and its religious bodies, the TSPM Church, and the leadership of the UBS. Pray for strong and righteous leaders and ask for mercy where they have failed.



Chinese Church Support Ministries

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



On September 16th Christian world leaders gathered in Washington DC at the newly built Museum of the Bible. The occasion was the launch of the AD 2020 Global Year of the Bible. Amongst those represented were the World Evangelical Alliance (WEC), Wycliffe Bible Translators, YWAM, the American Bible Society, the Pope and many church, Bible and mission organisations.

Together they signed the 'Bible Engagement Covenant' stating that the Bible is key to all areas of society and that God through His word gave us the foundations for life.

Bishop Efraim Tendaro, Secretary General of WEC said, "We will highlight the importance of the Bible as the enduring foundation for fostering unity, freedom, development and quality of life today and for the years to come."

Churches and Christians are to encourage:

- the increased and reflective reading of the Bible by individuals and communities all over the world;

- the translation, publication and distribution of the Bible in as many language communities that need it;
- supplying people in all areas of life, especially the younger generation, with resources that will facilitate better engagement with the Bible.

China has also signed an agreement in relation to the Bible this year. On April this year, the United Bible Societies (UBS) and Amity Foundation and Amity Printing held a signing ceremony to extend their joint venture and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to cooperate for a further ten years.

The China Christian Council, in 1985, set up an NGO called Amity Foundation which then signed an Agreement of Jointly Establishing Amity Printing and a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Bible Societies (a worldwide federation of Bible societies).

They announced their agreement to establish and equip a printing press in Nanjing with the main purpose of printing Bibles. The UBS made

a commitment to raise money for printing paper, thereby subsidising the cost of Bibles for Chinese believers. It also committed to the development and maintenance of the press.

It took just two years for Bible Societies around the globe to raise US \$7.3 million for the project and in 1987 the first Bible rolled off the press. Shortly after, in 1988, Amity Printing Company (APC) was established as a joint venture between Amity Foundation and the United Bible Societies. To date Amity is the only company in China permitted to print and sell Bibles.

As an NGO (non-governmental organisation), Amity Foundation was permitted to receive large donations from

overseas churches and non-governmental organizations. The United Bible Societies continues to raise funds from around the world to fund paper for Bible printing. This provides subsidised or even free Bibles for those in poor and remote areas and allows Chinese Christians to buy Bibles as gifts for friends, church visitors or newcomers. Bibles are distributed through state approved churches only.

Nowadays, Amity prints Bibles for many publishing houses around the world. Only a portion of its production is available for sale within China. The precise number of Bibles made available to believers inside China has been difficult to ascertain as figures include hymnals and New Testaments as well as the complete Bible.

The Veracity of the Scriptures

2019 is the centenary of the first edition of the China Union Version (CUV), the Chinese people's favourite Bible. It is much-loved by the of both the registered and unregistered churches of China and is famous for the beauty of its literary style.

Now the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which is officially atheist, is working on a new 'sinicized' Bible translation.

With any translation, contextualising the language and forms of the Bible is good and necessary for the advancement of the gospel only if it remains faithful to the truths of Scripture.

An example of how contextualisation can alter the meaning of the gospel, if not rightly treated, is pointed out in a 2012 report titled, "A Call To Faithful Witness" written for the 40th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church In America. It highlighted certain Bible translations, into the Muslim context, that were influenced by what it calls "Insider Movements".

The report said, "*The past two decades have witnessed the birth and proliferation of specialized Scripture "translations" for Muslims that remove from the text and/or redefine the divine familial terms Father, Son, and Son of God with the substitution of alternative terms such as "Guardian" for*

Father and “Caliph of God” or “Beloved of God” for Son.”

It is well known by Christians that if you remove the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Cross, or the Bible from the Christian faith, you have removed virtually all that is necessary to the message of salvation.

When the Apostle Paul visited the Province of Asia, he warned them that “fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Even from among your own group men will arise, teaching perversions of the truth to draw the disciples away after them.” [Acts 20:29]

The Bitter Winter article, “Sinicizing” the Bible: Jesus, Apparently, Was A Socialist” posted on 18th June 2019, revealed that churches in Shandong Province were being required to display a poster that linked 12 core principals of socialism to Bible passages.

On it, the socialist principal “Civility” is paired with James 3:17, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, accommodating, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and not hypocritical”. And the socialist value of “Freedom” was married to Galatians 5:13, “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity to indulge your flesh, but through love serve one another.” The socialist principal “The Rule of Law” was related to Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish these things but to fulfill them.” [NET]

Rightly interpreting the scriptures needs to embrace an understanding of the whole Bible. One example of this is demonstrated in Paul’s ministry.

In the Province of Asia, concerns had arisen among Jewish Christians living outside their homeland because of Paul’s teaching that they did not need to circumcise their children as required in God’s direct covenant to Abraham. (Genesis 7:1).

Jeremiah described the circumcision ritual as, “an external symbol of dedicated covenant commitment, you must genuinely dedicate yourselves to the Lord and get rid of everything that hinders your commitment to me...” [Jeremiah 4:4, NET].

Paul’s teaching was simply affirming God’s promise that in the future, “The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.” [Deuteronomy 30:6]

Christians know it is Christ who offers us a clean (circumcised) heart through the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the work of the Cross. Paul’s teaching did not change the purpose and intent of God’s edict for circumcision but indeed pointed to Christ who fulfils the Law.

Clearly, considering this example, there are some interesting discussions to be had about how the “Rule of [socialist] Law” fits into this context.

UBS Letter of Assurance

A statement has been released by the United Bible Societies (UBS) concerning the sinicisation of religion and new sinicised interpretation of the Bible. UBS is engaged in a joint venture with China's Amity Foundation to print and provide Bibles for the Chinese people.

"The media has reported on the encouragement of the Chinese authorities for religions in China to be sinicized and to become more Chinese.

In the Five-Year Plan of the Protestant Churches in China, the Churches in China are committed to be faithful to the biblical truths and to adhere to the fundamental beliefs as they continue to develop their Christian faith and practices which are rooted in the Chinese culture.

It is part of the continuing contextualization process and inculturation journey of Chinese Christianity.

Integral to the contextualization and inculturation of Christianity around the world is the translation, interpretation and teaching of the Bible in their particular contexts. Thus, the Churches in China will continue to strengthen their Biblical studies and research to develop and promote Biblical interpretation and notes which speak to and are relevant to the Chinese culture and contexts.

As Chinese Christians love and cherish the Word of God deeply, the Churches in China are committed to ensure that the contextualized Biblical interpretation and Bible annotation will be faithful to the Biblical text and truths. The Chinese Christian leaders and believers will not accept any "re-writing of the Bible" as reported in the media which are not based on the Biblical text and truths."



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