



# CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

## CHINA PRAYER LETTER



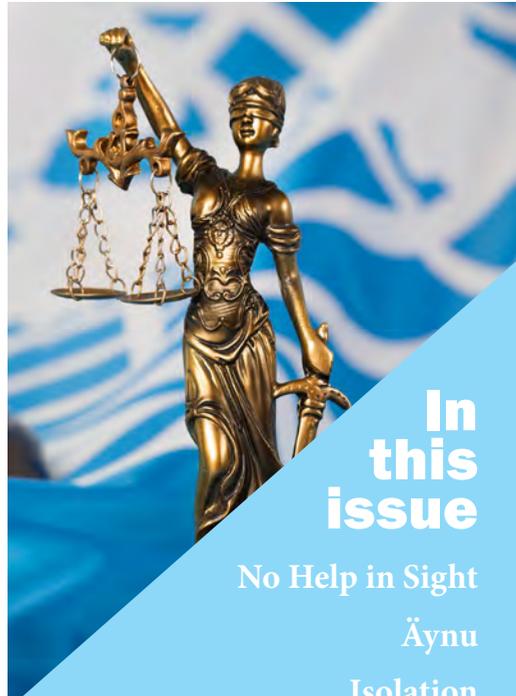
MAY 2020

## No Help in Sight

If anyone had any ember of hope that religious freedom or human rights could be restored in China, or indeed in any other nation, through appealing to the United Nations, those hopes have now been dashed on the rocks. The world is reeling with stunned disbelief after the announcement on April 1st, that China had been appointed to chair the five-member UN Human Rights Consultative Group.

This small body is greatly privileged with an important task. It vets and recommends candidates - either independent experts (special rapporteurs) or working groups - to fill UN mandates to investigate and advise on specific human rights concerns.

These mandates, called special procedures, are set by the larger 47-member UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and may relate to country-specific or thematic human rights issues such as freedom of



### In this issue

No Help in Sight

Äynu

Isolation

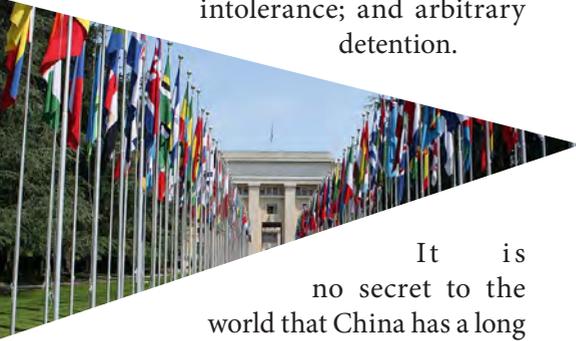
A Great Time to be a Bible  
College Student

George and Grace Stott

News from CCSM UK

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

religion; right to privacy; slavery; racial discrimination; xenophobia and related intolerance; and arbitrary detention.



It is no secret to the world that China has a long history of human rights abuse. That is what makes this appointment so hard to comprehend. You could say it's like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse.

China has a long history of ignoring invitations for country visits of UN special procedures to China. In other instances, it has delayed their visits. It is well known for withholding visas and dishing out reprisals to any who would meet openly with a rapporteur and for limiting the ability of rapporteurs to investigate freely in China. China shows blatant disregard for the recommendations of the special rapporteurs and working groups it will now be party to selecting.

In its new position, China has the power to weed out any special rapporteurs or working groups it feels it cannot manipulate, or that may give it a bad report. This is especially convenient for China at such a time as this when it is fending off accusations of forced organ harvesting, detaining over a million Uyghur people in “re-

education” camps, enacting a war on religion, rolling out an Orwellian surveillance state, censoring and silencing its citizens' freedom of speech and deliberately withholding information that could have prevented a deadly pandemic from sweeping the world.

How did this happen? Perhaps the answer does not lie within the borders of China but further afield. America withdrew from the UNHRC in June 2018 allowing China to step into the gap. But it's unfair to place the blame on this nation. Responsibility must be shared by all the nations who have voted China into its current position. Materialism and greed have made nations debtors to China. The borrower is servant to the lender and China is now calling the shots. It is a struggle to find one nation that would give up the riches China promised in favour of human rights.

Will there ever be help in sight for the oppressed in China?

As Christians we are called to “*Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.*” [Isaiah 1:17]. But although we are called to do these things, our fight is not against flesh and blood. King David sums it up here:

*“I look up toward the hills. From where does my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth.”* Psalm 121:1 [NET]

# Äynu

(Ainu 艾努人, Abdal لادباي )

The little known Äynu people, live scattered throughout the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China. This vast, remote, far western province has high mountain ranges on three sides and uninhabitable deserts on the other. Oasis communities and riverside villages line the fringe of the deserts. The famous Silk Road trade routes passed through the area, creating some larger towns.

Its estimated there are 10,000-50,000 Äynu, but numbers are difficult to establish as the Äynu are counted under the Uyghur Minority. After the formation of the Communist State in 1949 they applied to be recognized as a distinct ethnic group, but their request was refused.

On the surface, they are not noticeably different to their Uyghur neighbours and even some Uyghurs cannot tell them apart. Customs such as engagement and



wedding traditions vary but both groups follow Sunni Islam with the exception of a few southern Äynu being Shia Muslims. It's extremely rare for Äynu to have studied Arabic so most cannot read the Quran. They use the Uyghur language outside of their homes and with their womenfolk. But under the shelter of their roofs, with no strangers about, the men speak their own Äynu language.

There are various legends about their origins. Some Äynu say they arrived as refugees after the defeat of a 5th and 6th century Khanate in Central Asia. Certainly, their language would indicate a history in Iran and Afghanistan. Äynu (Ainu) is a blended language, with nearly a third of their words being

## International Short-Term Teams

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

Persian and the grammar being Turkic. It also has loan words from Arabic, Russian and Mongolian. A historic refugee status could explain the fact the Uyghur call them 'Abdal' a word which means 'beggar'. If there had been discrimination against incoming destitute immigrants that would explain the need for them to beg. Still, in the last decade it was not uncommon to see an Äynu beggar holding a fist of small notes quietly asking for alms.

Most Äynu are herders of sheep and goats, with some earning a living as hunters or fishermen along the rivers. Others make handcrafts (such as basket weaving and sieve making) or are small traders or healers. In the past, tension with their Turkic neighbours resulted in the Äynu being pushed out to the less fertile regions. Äynu were known as a 'caste of circumcisers', providing a service for Muslims in the region who usually undergo the ritual at age seven. Alongside their adherence to Islam, the Äynu are also known to practice witchcraft and some earn a living in palm reading and fortune telling.

Their lifestyle is said to be very similar to the Central Asia's Gypsies. They are not tied to a location but will secure their house and move on if conditions become too harsh in a location.



Wherever they go they knit into a tight community, and strangers in their streets are not always welcomed. Äynu do not intermarry and the Uyghur also refuse to marry Äynu. So, although they appear assimilated, in fact they have preserved a separate lineage, in like manner to the Gypsy's.

In recent decades gospel radio in Uyghur language has been broadcast into the region, but there is much social pressure to remain in Islam and no Christians are reported among them.

Rapid change came to the area after 1962 when a railroad was put through the desert bringing Xinjiang closer to Beijing and the rest of China. Nowadays, many migrate to the cities to work in construction and industry. Numerous Äynu are expected to be among those detained in Xinjiang's "re-education" camps, bringing significant change to their lifestyles, culture and futures.

# Isolation

*“I will never leave you and I will never abandon you.” [Heb 10:5, NET]*

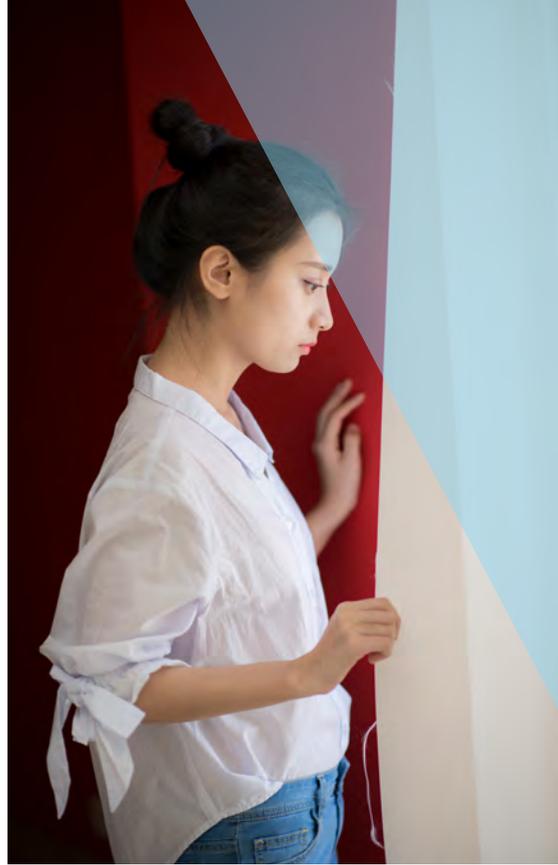
The effects of isolation on a human are real and serious. Feelings of loneliness can develop and become dangerous health issues.

Loneliness can lead to depression, lower cognitive function, mental illness and suicide. It can weaken the body’s immune functions and make it more susceptible to inflammation and infection. Sleep is affected by loneliness, and insomnia has its own set of harmful side effects. Social isolation is strongly associated with increased risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Apparently, it is the quality of our social interactions, more than the number of people we interact with, that determines loneliness. One good friend is worth many acquaintances. Yet is it’s not just friendships but also interactions with family, groups and community that are ‘good medicine’ to our souls.

People who have experienced divorce or the death of a spouse are particularly likely to find themselves isolated and lonely. As divorce is a rising statistic in China, and rapid rise in the number of elderly is expected in the coming decades, it is therefore a fair prediction to say that loneliness will also increase.

Researchers have shown that around



20% of China’s elderly are considered to be socially isolated and that about 28% of older Chinese, those over 65, report feeling lonely.

Migrant workers from China’s minority peoples are another group that can find themselves struggling with loneliness brought about by cultural and language barriers. Even though they may live in a factory dorm alongside hundreds of others, they can feel very alone.

Coping with isolation has been a topic of discussion with regard to the strict quarantine lockdowns in China made necessary by CoVid-19. In this situation, internet or phone communication

with friends and family and television programmes have been a great comfort for many who have suddenly found themselves restricted to their apartments. But radio has also played a part.

The Far Eastern Broadcasting Company (FEBC) reported that during the lockdown their Christian radio service has been attracting particularly large audiences. They use several methods of sending radio across China and, in addition to music, their programmes include live prayer and chat, teaching and pastoral care, programmes to help combat stress, hopelessness and panic and helpful

health information. Through the service many in Wuhan and around China have been able to share the difficulties they have faced under the Coronavirus restrictions.

In his letter to the Hebrews Paul urged the early Christians not to stop meeting together. He knew Christians would need to encourage each other *“all the more as you see the Day approaching”*. (Heb 10:5 NIV). The Church body needs fellowship to be healthy, but in exceptional times when we cannot meet together, it’s important to still reach out.

## A Great Time to be a Bible College Student



*“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”* [2 Timothy 2:15]

In these strange days as the world confronts Covid-19, our need for well trained Christians in China is as vital as ever. But how do you train thousands of people during and after such a lockdown? By media. Radio and online broadcasting get through to people wherever they are and deliver teaching content, health

information, and companionship to millions.

FEBC is the Far East Broadcasting Company and has been communicating the good news of Jesus Christ to Chinese listeners for nearly 75 years. Through many challenging seasons radio signals have delivered life-giving messages to isolated, persecuted, and spiritually hungry people.

This current season of pandemic fallout comes hot on the heels of unrest in Hong Kong last year. This means our broadcasters are challenged on many sides as they produce and deliver

# PRAYER POINTERS

## No Help in Sight

- Pray for China, that its people will find the deliverance they need from the Creator of heaven and earth.
- Praise God that He is working out His plans. Pray for patient endurance.

Pray that the Lord will increase faith, hope and love among His people.

Pray for our nations outside China to repent of putting possessions before people. Pray that our leaders will turn and do what is right; seek justice and defend the oppressed.

## Äynu (Ainu 艾努人, Abdal لادباي)

Thank God for this unique and precious people group.

Pray that the Äynu will have every opportunity to hear of their true Messiah.

Pray that the Äynu will come to know their true identity and great value in the Kingdom of God.

Pray that families affected by the camps will be reunited and healed.

Pray for healing in relation to ethnic divisions, injustice, fear and hatred. Pray that Christ will restore peace in Xinjiang.

## Isolation

Thank God that his people are never truly alone. Declare that He has promised never to leave us or forsake us.

Pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit to flood Chinese believers with comfort, peace, and joy when they are isolated in their faith. Pray that the Father, who builds his church, will increase their endurance and deepen their relationship with Him.

Pray that the Spirit will lead believers to find safe places and ways to meet together.

Pray that Hong Kong will remain a safe place for ministries, such as Christian radio, reaching out to the Mainland.

# PRAYER POINTERS

## A Great Time to be a Bible College Student.

FEBC's Bible College by Media has experienced massive demand this year. Praise God that many have discovered and benefited from these courses and from the Liangyou Theological Seminary (LTS) App.

In countries from where FEBC creates Chinese language broadcasts, Covid-19 travel restrictions and lockdowns have made it difficult for staff and production teams to get to studios and equipment. Ask the Lord to make a way for all their programmes to continue operating smoothly.

Pray for the health and safety of all involved and for their ability to continue to minister into lives and hearts.

## George and Grace Stott

Thank God that nothing in our lives is a mess. He makes use of all we offer him, even our tragedies and disasters.

Praise God that millions of people in Wenzhou have been released from idol worship and superstition and have come to know the true and living God.

Pray that Wenzhou Christians will look back at God's faithfulness and will be strengthened to continue the race.

Pray that Christians in the free countries will continue to maintain the joy of salvation for purposes of service, not for selfish enjoyment.

## News from CCSM UK

Pray for those suffering loss and facing challenges at this time, both in China and around you.

Pray that the Christians will be 'salt and light' wherever they are, and that those countries facing the biggest challenges will receive the greatest help.

Pray that the church in China still facing restrictions will flourish and grow despite the government-imposed barriers.

Pray that Christians in China and our home country will use the freedoms they have to obey God and serve Him in all the ways He calls.



**Chinese Church Support Ministries**

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

programmes while themselves facing the trials of infrastructure and virus.

On top of all this, FEBC listenership is reaching new heights each month! As people isolate, they naturally seek comfort, information, and hope, and this is what FEBC has been delivering to China from the outset.

The challenge is - at a time when getting to the studios and operating the equipment is the most difficult, the programmes are in the highest demand!

Another offshoot of isolation is that many people are seeking Biblical learning, and many Bible College students are catching up on assignments. Since 1982 FEBC has been operating and developing a Bible College by Media. Today it is known as Liangyou Theological Seminary (LTS) and lessons are broadcast on the web, smartphone Apps, AM and shortwave radio.

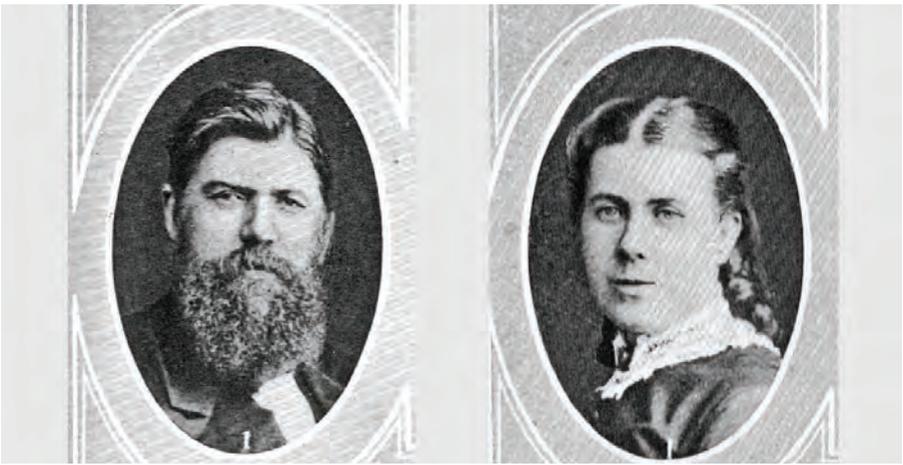
FEBC's Bible College by Media has experienced massive demand this year since the Coronavirus forced everyone inside. The good news is that students found the time to get their assignments done. Most are working and studying the Bible at the same time. But a 50% increase in assignment returns means FEBC staff are flooded with marking and pastoral care. Please pray as they long to care for the person as well as mark the work.

The other spinoff is that since the LTS App is available to anyone, people can choose to enrol in the college or simply study the



Bible and Ministry lessons without being tutored. During the Covid-19 crisis many thousands of people are informally using the resources of the LTS. In February alone the App was installed 38,717 times more than usual, and more than 46,424 extra lessons were downloaded!

Enrolments are also coming in at twice the usual rate, so all indications are that this is going to be a very busy year for FEBC's Bible College by Media. FEBC invites the wider church to join their work by sponsoring a student through the programme. Each ministry-trained Chinese Christian has the potential to start and grow a healthy church. And that is something to be very grateful for.



## Grace and George Stott

*"In due season we shall reap, if we faint not."* - Gal 6:9 [NET]

In times when endurance is tested it is good to look back at what God has done. This article is going to look back at the lives of Scottish missionaries Grace and George Stott.

George's story did not have a happy beginning. At aged 19 he slipped, landing on a stone with his knee. White swelling set in and two years later the leg was amputated. But God used this tragedy as an opportunity to construct a steadfast and enduring faith in George that would see him through the challenging years ahead. The loss of his leg caused him to take up teaching, a vocation that he would put to good use in the future.

In 1865 George was among the first to join the China Inland Mission. He said, "I do not see those with two legs going, so I must."

After two years language learning in Ningpo, George moved to Wenzhou and was followed shortly afterwards by Grace. They were married and began their life of service together.

Few Wenzhou citizens had never seen a white person, but the unequal treaties had fuelled hatred of foreigners. As such, the Stotts were a target for dangerous rumours; the most bizarre of which had them accused of eating babies and leading an uprising against the city. They often bore the brunt of people's superstitions but with God's grace, quiet diplomacy and wisdom, Mr Stott was able to deflect many arrows.

They opened a boys school, and later a girls school after realising the young men would grow up having no local Christian women to marry. The girls school took longer to gain pupils as it made a stand against foot binding. Most of their students came to know the Lord and became Christian workers after they left

school.

While Grace managed the schools and taught Bible classes, George would ride out on tours of the outlying hamlets, preaching and selling books. Often over a thousand listeners came to see the foreigner. He preached from the village theatre, or in the temple, or even from his horse's back.

As the young church grew and lives were changed, local believers were trained to preach also, but not without thorough examination of their faith and understanding. Stott's conversation with one young candidate was recorded:

“Before sending him out on his first mission, he told him he was to preach Christ, and to leave idolatry and their idols and idol customs alone; for as soon as truth entered into their heart the other would soon go out. After talking for some time, he asked the boy if he understood

what he meant. He said, ‘Yes; you mean like this: the people are now living in an old tumbled-down hut, and you don't want me to pull this down about their ears. I am, as it were, to build a beautiful house, furnished with all good things, and then invite them to leave their old broken-down hut and enter into their new possession.’”

George passed away in 1889 and Grace continued the work. Through success and setback George and Grace were selfless, tireless and courageous workers. With these attributes they left a strong foundation and a Spirit filled church which had grown to over 300 members by the time Grace returned to England in 1895. The official State numbers for Wenzhou Church were over a million in 2012. Unofficial numbers are believed to be much higher.

We recommend Grace Stott's written account “Twenty-Six Years Of Missionary Work In China” as an exciting read.

## News from CCSM UK



*“Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.” [James 5:7-8 NIV]*

There have been many words spoken and written in the last two months about what is changing and happening in the world. Many of you are facing a variety of challenges, but then some are enjoying a slower pace of life.

The verses above remind us that there are times to be patient, to wait for

the Lord. But it implies this should be active – ‘be patient and stand firm’, not just a passive ‘do nothing’ approach, but waiting in hope, in anticipation and living life while waiting. Stand firm believing that God is in control, stand firm knowing that God has not abandoned His world.

Although we wait for change to happen, there are times when we need to act.

*“You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name.”* [Acts 22:15-16 NIV]

As Paul retells the story of his earlier experiences, he says he told them ‘what are you waiting for?’ Maybe this world crisis is a call to act and do what

God is asking you to do?

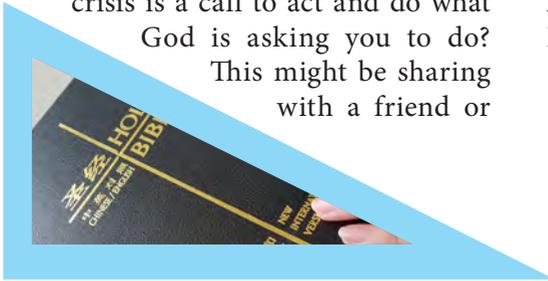
This might be sharing  
with a friend or

a family member about Jesus, it might be committing to pray for someone or a situation every day. It might be taking on volunteer work. It might be deciding to go to China on one of our Teams (when they start running again) or giving financially. If not now, then when?

Please do pray for what God would have you do. Wait on Him to hear His voice – but then act on what He says. If you need to leave your home to do this, then wait until you can leave, but share with someone your intention. Although we have been held in our homes for a period of time, God has not been limited, so let us look for a release of God working in and through us all around the world. To Him be the glory.

**Martyn Wells**

Director CCSM UK



**CCSM UK**

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

National Director: Martyn Wells  
[uk@amccsm.org](mailto:uk@amccsm.org)  
[www.amccsm.org](http://www.amccsm.org)

