



# CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

## CHINA PRAYER LETTER

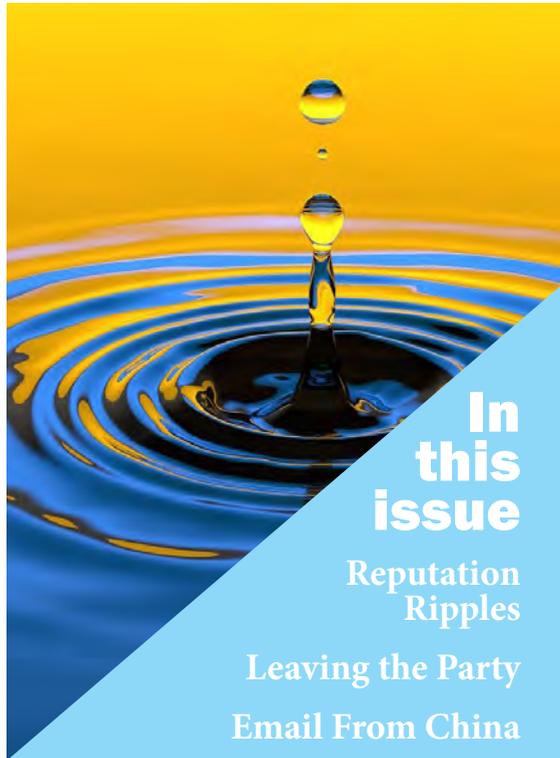


SEPTEMBER 2020

## Reputation Ripples

China's Social Credit System (SCS) has been developing and expanding since the concept was unveiled in 2014. It is now well advanced and expected to be fully implemented by the end of 2020. The system scores the trustworthiness of individuals, businesses, or other organisations. However, none of these entities stand alone: a personal score can affect an individual's firm, the firm they work for, or even a firm's partner organisations.

The SCS draws from an intertwined network of scoring and ranking systems. An overall score will consider all ranking mechanisms relevant to a person's position or an entity's industry. Whether they are a government official, a student, a charity or a business, their



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score will give an indication of their financial integrity, creditworthiness, compliance, social responsibility, and trustworthiness.

Data for a business's social credit score is collected from its own self-reporting and from official inspections or monitoring, and through companies such as Alibaba.

With a bad score potentially causing serious damage, or even the demise of an enterprise, companies have been frantically auditing all aspects of their businesses to ensure they are compliant with industry regulations, national laws and obligations. A breach or oversight that in the past may have led to a simple fine could now have a much wider and more enduring repercussion. A poor score could affect a company's tax rate, their marketability and business opportunities. It could put them on blacklists that may affect credit terms, limit government approvals, increase official inspections and even lead to public naming and shaming. Already there is a searchable list of disreputable

companies on the Credit China Website ([www.creditchina.gov.cn](http://www.creditchina.gov.cn)).

Extra care must now be taken by companies to vet employees, associates and even organisations in the supply chain, as their scores could potentially impact the business. In this new "Reputation State" mud sticks.

The benefits of a SCS are obvious. Companies are highly motivated to self-regulate. Workplaces will become safer and marketplaces more secure.

But alongside these advantages there is a downside for people of faith. The stakes are becoming higher and higher for those that wish to worship God outside the confines of a state church. If they are caught at an unauthorised gathering the SCS penalties will have a ripple effect that could extend to their family, friends, businesses, or employers. There is now more pressure for Christians to 'hide their lamps under a bushel' in the workplace. And greater risk to those that would hire a Christian.



# Leaving the Party

Around 2004, Mae became a Christian in China. As she grew in her walk with Father, she came to the belief that He was asking her to resign from the Communist Party of China (CCP). She was a lecturer in law at a university and knew that Chinese law provided for people to be able to end their party membership.

She first went to her faculty head to explain why she wanted to leave, telling him how she had come to faith. As she was a valued member of the staff he suggested that, because she had told him, and he knew she was a believer, this should be enough. Don't go any further with it.

Mae had a teenage daughter and was divorced. She approached the leaders of the Three Self Church and housegroup

church for guidance. They agreed the faculty head's advice was good, she had

done what Father had shown her by telling her boss, and there was no need to go any further.

At first Mae listened to these people because they had been believers much longer than her. But as time went on, she felt again a direction from Holy Spirit that she was to leave the Party. To be a member you must swear allegiance to the CCP and disavow any belief in God.

Even though it is possible to be a teacher without being a Party member, to rise in the ranks one must join. Yet, again, Mae went back to her department head and insisted she wanted to go through the process of leaving the Party. Pressure started to be put on her from other Party members, warnings that she would

## International Short-Term Teams

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lose her job, that her daughter's study and work prospects would be affected adversely, that her ex-husband would be affected. Her ex-husband was asked to put pressure on her to not pursue this.

Mae however was sure, through confirmations and assurances from Father in his Word, that she was to persevere. She found out the exact process, who to write to, what forms to put in, and over a period of about two years or more she persevered. She cleverly argued her case in writing, always pointing back to the legal documents which gave her the right to resign. There were regular visits from various people from the university warning her that what she was doing was going to ruin her and her family. Of course, Mae was concerned about her daughter, but her relationship with the Father, Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit was what gave her the courage to trust and carry on.

Eventually, she was not permitted to teach any more. She was transferred to the library. Surprisingly, her salary increased, and she didn't have to work as many hours as she had as a lecturer!

As a very popular teacher she was missed very much by her students and colleagues. Many of her students sought her out to ask her why she had left. Many of her colleagues also went looking for her. A professor at the library was very curious and asked many questions about Mae's faith. Mae was delighted because she enjoyed the job and it gave her a chance to talk to so many people about Jesus. From this there were students who wanted to find out more, so she started meeting with them at her home.

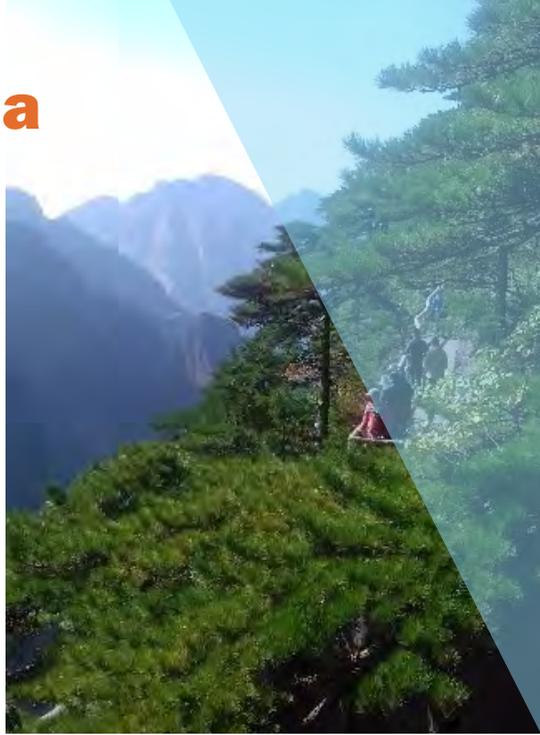
Since Mae's experience times have changed. It is likely that today it would be even more difficult for anyone wanting to resign from the CCP.

# Email From China

“I do so wish we could meet again.” wrote my Chinese friend Robby last week. “I do miss talking about faith and there’s no-one else..”

The feeling is mutual. Over the last four years we’ve spent much time working, eating, relaxing together and our conversations have ranged far and wide. Robby has known my struggles. He shared my frustrations when one of our engineering trials gave results that made no sense. He knew the difficult family situation I’d left my wife to cope with. He also knew my answered prayers, such as the chemical process in the lab that wouldn’t perform, until I asked a group back home to pray. We made some adjustments, and a week later, my colleagues asked what I’d done – was this magic or something?

Now, the four years of part-time consultancy have come to an end. My work in China began when I joined up with an old friend (and boss) from printing plate manufacturing days who was based at a university in Hubei province. He was working to commercialise a new type of printing plate, using a group of postgraduate engineers. The project needed scientific input and experience. I provided much of this by working from home, as well as making eight visits to China averaging three weeks at a time. During this period, the engineers grew in confidence and the



project came close to success, until our source of funding disappeared.

During my fifth visit Robby, myself and a colleague were sent to carry out a weekend trial at a factory close to the Yellow Mountains, a national park in Anhui province. We arrived on Friday afternoon to find out that the production line wouldn’t be free until Monday. The purpose of my trip wasn’t to sightsee, but over the weekend, the sun shone, so we enjoyed one wonderful day walking around the pinnacled peaks, and another cycling around tea plantations and bamboo forests before returning to work!

My first attempts to share my faith with people whose language and culture were so different from my own, were



stumbling and clumsy. I found that, just as in England, it's about having a go and making connections. Another of my young colleagues, Juicy John, took me up our city's local landmark. Over a meal afterwards, he tearfully told me about his own family problems and I shared how Jesus has made it possible for me to bear my own.

Shortly before my final visit to China, Robby fell in love, and it was a joy to meet Olive. We were able to go to church

together three times, and she listened, wide-eyed, as she heard for the first time the story of Jesus' death and resurrection and how he performed miracles. I wish we could have continued exploring together. Their links with church were not strong enough for them to carry on after I left.

When I replied to Robby's email, I urged him to pick up the Chinese Bible I bought him and to read it along with Olive. I explained that, though he does not have me, he can make his own connection with Jesus. "For faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10 vs 17). I believe a seed has been planted, and I pray with all my heart that it will be watered.

*[CCSM is grateful to John H for sharing this story. Names have been altered for privacy reasons.]*

## Not Home Yet



A believer who lived for two decades in China's most western province, Xinjiang, talks about the heart-rending experience of leaving this region that had become her home...

"I left my home in North-west China in 2018 after living there for nearly 20 years.

Since 2017, hundreds of people like myself have left, either because they were squeezed out by new regulations or by old regulations now being enforced. Others were made to leave by authorities after having their visas denied or revoked.

Since 2016, hundreds of thousands (with some estimates saying up to two million) local Uyghur people have been picked up and put into what the government calls

# PRAYER POINTERS

## Reputation Ripples

Pray that Chinese believers will seek to remain in the centre of God's will in everything they do both at work and at home.

Pray that China's believers will fill their lamps and will shine brightly in the rising darkness.

Pray that the Social Credit System will not be used as a weapon against people of faith.

Praise God that He is faithful. *'It is better to take shelter in the Lord, than to trust in people.'* [Psalm 118.8 NET]

## Leaving the Party

Praise God for his faithfulness to Mae as she stepped out in obedience to His direction.

Praise God that He knows the end from the beginning. Thank Him for the guidance of His Word and His Spirit.

Pray for Mae and her daughter, that they will continue to strengthen their relationship with the Father and that they in turn, will be able to strengthen other believers.

Pray that God will water and nurture the seeds she has sown in the lives of those around her.

## Email From China

Pray that the Holy Spirit will help Chinese believers like Robby, who's foreign friends have returned home, to grow and mature in their faith.

Pray that God will pursue them with His love, lead them to find fellowship in His family and encourage them into His Word.

Pray that more Christians will be prompted to reach out to their Chinese neighbours and colleagues, and ask God to provide the time, the opportunities and the boldness needed to make connections.

# PRAYER POINTERS

## Not Home Yet

Pray that the doors of hearts and minds of those suffering in Xinjiang will be opened up to the One who loves them.

Please pray for both Han and Uyghur believers to be a support to each other.

Pray for Han believers to have opportunities to encourage and show kindness to Uyghur people, in whatever way they can, and to have empathy.

## No Immunity

Pray that the fear experienced during this time of oppression will lead to a deeper search for the God of Truth.

Pray that God will make a way for healing and reconciliation between Uyghur and Han.

Pray that injustices will be brought into the light.

## News From CCSM UK

Pray for God's work to continue to grow in China.

Pray for the joy and hope that Christians have to be seen by friends and family so that more will come to Christ and share in this joy and hope.

Pray that we will be faithful in prayer, and that more churches will recognise the importance of prayer for mission in countries where it is difficult to be a Christian.



**Chinese Church Support Ministries**

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and support the church and  
the people of China

're-education' camps. Those families from which both the mother and father were taken, lost their children to the state. There is no possibility of knowing whether or not they will ever see each other again. It is heart-breaking! Many Han locals have also left the area out of fear, or because of the devastating affect all these actions have had on the economy.

Christians in the region are under huge pressure. Officially approved Churches that had programmes running all day Sunday and through the week are now restricted to operating for only for 2 hours on a Sunday and not during the week. It is a risk to be seen to be going to the Church.

For the many missionaries that have been forced to leave, the transition is not an easy time. For me, returning to the place that used to be my home, but has not been for nearly 20 years, is another culture shift. Rather than a 'coming home' it is a 'new start' in a place that is greatly changed. It is trying to make a new life, while your heart is still very much with the home that you left, whilst feeling there isn't a 'place' here yet for me.

I recall one day six months after my return, waking up in a lovely apartment that I'd been given use of for a few days, not really understanding how I was feeling. I sighed deeply, saying to Jesus, "OK Lord, I'm ready to go home now." I realised everything felt temporary to me, I was moving regularly, home was my place in China.

My friends, in the same position, have similar feelings.

The blessing for me, is that it forces me to constantly consciously trust. Rom 15:13 (NIV) says, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." This is the verse that has guided me. My part is to trust in the one who is trustworthy; His part is the rest.

This trust is even more difficult, but vital, for those who are incarcerated with no legal system to protect them. Their hope is in God to bring this terrible period to an end."





## No Immunity

Imagine a world where your every movement is watched. Where, who you meet, who you visit, and even what you talk about is monitored. Where you can be hauled off a bus mid journey or dragged out of your car at a checkpoint, where your belongings, your identity, your face, your fingerprints and your irises are scanned several times a day and where the contents of your cellphone could send you to prison for the rest of your life.

This is the new reality for more than 10 million Uyghurs (pronounced Weega) in China's north west Xinjiang province since the former governor of Tibet, Chen Quanguo, was summoned in 2017 to take over the helm of Xi Jinping's second most problematic province.

His arrival saw the bio data and DNA harvested from every Uyghur in the area, Orwellian amounts of surveillance equipment, miles of razor wire and security fencing installed, and police

stations built on every street corner. More worrying than all this put together, he speed-built a vast network of camps into which up to two million Uyghurs, were incarcerated extra judicially for "crimes" such as "unusual beards", long skirts, headscarves, having foreign friends, or simply possessing a trinket inscribed with Arabic calligraphy.

Days are spent wondering whether one of the multitudinous police checks every 500 metres, could flag you up as "dangerous", "suspicious" or simply someone to watch, and a five minute trip to buy a packet of milk could see you hauled off to re-education with no chance to say goodbye. The next time your relatives might hear from you is when you surprise them with a call a year later as a reward for memorizing the President's speeches in Chinese, a language that is not your mother tongue. The first conversation with them, after all this time wondering whether you are

dead or alive, is two minutes in the new language you have been cramming for all you are worth to be worthy of this call, full of praise for the Party

and expressions of gratitude to Xi Jinping for giving them a chance of “vocational training.”

Nights are spent listening out for the nuanced sounds on the stairs. Is it a neighbour returning from work, a friend coming to call, or the community police coming to check the notebook in which you will have written the daily comings and goings of people on your landing? Armed police will block your front door while they inspect your home for traces of books by banned authors, out of date

Korans, or second cellphones containing banned apps you don't dare to declare on the street. If you are very unlucky, they will decide to take you away, probably at first to a “re-education” camp, before they decide whether your “crimes” deserve a stiffer sentence, your family will be summarily evicted, the door will be sealed up, and they will have to seek refuge with neighbours or friends until the dust settles.

No one is immune from the roundups. There seems to be no obvious rationale. Singers, dancers, teachers, doctors and academics are not immune and many thousands, themselves loyal Party members, have disappeared not to re-emerge even to this day.

## News from CCSM UK



*“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” [Romans 12:12, NIV]*

This verse at the end of chapter 12 is simple in encouraging and challenging us to remain constant and demonstrate joy, patience and faithfulness. All three are important but I want to emphasise ‘faithful in prayer’.

Many of you will be familiar with James Hudson Taylor's life story, in which he founded China Inland Mission, and at one stage he was led by God to gather

‘rope-holders’ who would support him as he went back to China to serve God on the front line. These rope-holders were people who prayed and supported him day by day.

You may also be familiar with the life story of J O Fraser who brought the gospel to the Lisu people of south-west China. After some time of very little response to his preaching, he was led by God to appeal to his mother

and her friends in the UK to create a prayer group to support him in the work. Not long after this group began to meet regularly in prayer, he saw a great response to the gospel. Both these men of God recognised that God used prayer to enlarge the kingdom of God. That prayer is vital for the gospel to reach into darkness. Prayer around the world led to church growth and openings for the gospel in China.

So, the message is simple – we need to pray, and we need to be faithful in prayer.

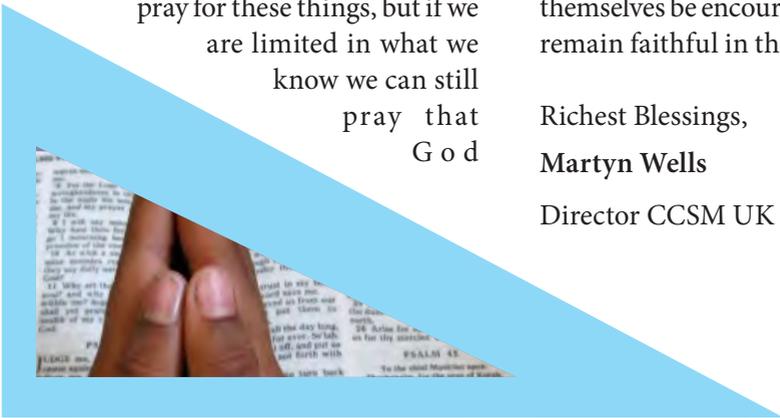
If we have names and details we can pray for these things, but if we are limited in what we know we can still pray that  
G o d

would demonstrate his faithfulness and that his kingdom would continue to grow in China. Prayer is needed, and we can all pray even without leaving the country or even leaving our homes! Much has been accomplished in China through prayer, and as surveillance and opposition against Christians increase, we should be increasing in our prayers, and remaining faithful in prayer.

Do pray for Chinese Christians facing pressure to renounce their faith, and pray for those Christians from other countries still serving in China, that they will themselves be encouraged and enabled to remain faithful in their life and witness.

Richest Blessings,  
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)

