



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

CHINA PRAYER LETTER



JULY 2021

China News Brief

Desperate for a new start in a free land, 28 adults and 32 children from an unregistered Shenzhen church have voted to leave China for Jeju, a South Korean island. (June 2, 2021, Wall Street Journal). They went to seek asylum from China's religious restrictions and the persecution of their unregistered church members that had become unbearable. Jeju allows visitors from certain countries to apply for a visa on arrival but those that come seeking refugee status are usually sorely disappointed. Korea accepted only 30 refugees out of 15,322 applicants in 2019, so these church members face the very real threat of being repatriated. ChinaAid is assisting them with their case. The group was from the Reformed Holy Church, which was pastored by a former doctor, Pan Yongguang.

Beginning in late April, a number of Christian social media accounts were shut down, according to reports from China Christian Daily. They stated that on April



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29th, several popular Christian WeChat accounts with “Bible” or “gospel” disappeared. Any WeChat search using keywords including “Christ (Jidu in Chinese)”, “gospel”, and “fellowship” failed to return any Christian-related public accounts.



The report named around twenty WeChat accounts that appear to have been banned, the list including some prominent TSPM (state approved) churches, the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, some Christian bookstores and publishing houses, a national Catholic newspaper and 9 Marks, a church leadership equipping and biblical resource page.

China’s vaccination program is charging ahead. More than 40% of China’s population now has at least one dose. The intended goal is to reach 80% coverage by the end of 2021. Inoculation is not mandatory for citizens. China is enforcing vast testing, strict limits on movement, targeted lockdowns, and intense monitoring of foreign arrivals. Church entry is currently dependent on members scanning their smartphones health code app and seminary students.

On a different note, the Politburo

announced on 31st May 2021 that Chinese women may now have three children. Although being good news, the pro-birth policy has been met with scepticism. Fears are that employers may further shy away from employing women. Many families view multiple children as an impossible burden due to the high costs of daycare and education. One netizen pointed out that parents opting to raise three children would ‘deserve a medal’ as they would also be caring for four elderly parents, while working and facing a delayed legal retirement age.

On an international front, China ‘bumped elbows’ with Iran, after signing off an epic 25-year strategic cooperation agreement on the 27th March, 2021. The deal is said to see China invest US\$400 billion into Iran’s economy over that time period in exchange for a heavily-discounted supply of oil. The deal covers a variety of economic activities from oil and mining, nuclear power, banking, ports, railways, health care, intelligence sharing, telecommunications, as well as tourism and cultural exchanges and agricultural collaborations. This is in the face of US sanctions on Iranian oil. The final details of the deal have yet to be released. But, according to the New York Times, the draft version called for a ‘deepening military cooperation, including joint training and exercises, joint research and weapons development and intelligence-sharing’. It was rumoured to allow China to lease Iranian islands and to deploy Chinese security forces in Iran but this has been emphatically denied by

Iran. Iran is known for its hegemonic ambitions has close cooperation with Hamas and Turkey. If successful this deal could have significant benefits for both its parties and may create further opportunities for Chinese Christians to live and work along the 'One Road One Belt' trade route.

Jesus says,

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27 NKJV)



In China’s unregistered churches, the pastor’s job description often follows the ‘tentmaker’ model demonstrated by the Apostle Paul. Yet Paul could not have travelled and accomplished all he did without help. Nor did he. Paul received repeated contributions from the Philippians, food and lodging from

those he stayed with on his travels and gifts from his supporters. In Romans 16, he acknowledged Phoebe and Gaius for their assistance both financially and with hospitality. Paul’s ministry was not like that of a ‘money preacher’ seeking profit from his ministry, but neither did he go entirely without remuneration.

International Short-Term Teams

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

And when
he wasn't
travelling he
worked for his living.
What a great example he set.

When Paul left his trusted co-worker Timothy behind in Ephesus in a pastor's role, he charged him to *preach the Word in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, encourage, with great patience and instruction*. Timothy had the great privilege of being discipled by Paul, and you could say he had 'on the job' training'.

Yet Paul continued to disciple Timothy in letters after they parted. Timothy like all Christians, needed advice, teaching and encouragement so that both he, and those he ministered to, would continue to stay strong in their faith and grow. Paul encouraged him to "*Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.*"

CCSM has recently begun working with a partner organisation that assists Chinese pastors. This Pastor Project identifies pastors who have a passion to spread the Gospel while at the same time building disciples of those they have already led to Christ. The pastors who are selected mostly live in remote rural areas caring for people in a 30 km radius from their homes.

training both for themselves and for those under their care. So, the Project provides them with a comprehensive digital library of Christian material, all on a tiny micro SD card. This material covers all aspects of Christian growth and ministry, and has Bibles, video and podcasts, thousands of books and teaching for all ages.

But that is not all, the pastors are also provided with another valuable resource – time! Through supporter gifts the Pastor Project is able to subsidize pastor's income, allowing them to reduce the hours they work. Even a few less hours a week gives them time to dig deeper into the Word, developing their grasp truth and knowledge and growing their faith, and their pastoring skills. This in turn is passed on to those in their care.

Like Paul, these pastors are not wanting a free ride. But they are anxious to tend and support the small churches they have planted. Living in poor areas they shepherd their flock on foot or by bicycle, travelling many kilometres between believer's houses. Although it might sound romantic, the reality is that it requires time to travel by foot, especially when visiting a village 20km away. With a six day work week this is virtually impossible to maintain.

The Pastor Project partners with them to bring their secular work back to part time, provides bicycles if needed and frees these pastors to use the gifts that God has given them to build up the body.

These pastors lack access to resources and

Gu Mengfei 顾梦飞

Gu Mengfei is the second leader in our series looking at key figures in China's oversight of the Protestant Church.

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel”
(Paul's letter to the Philippeans 1:27, NASB)



‘Unity’ is the resounding theme of Gu Mengfei’s career. He holds the position of Secretary General for the National Committee of Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) of the Chinese Protestant Churches. To Gu, unity is not something perfectly attained by the TSPM churches, despite the removal of denominational barriers - he believes the church ought to be constantly unifying.

Gu Mengfei was born in 1973 in Wuxi City, Jiangsu. After a stint at Løgumkloster Folk High School High School in Denmark, he studied History at Nanjing University. He was later conferred a degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Peking University (Beijing). In 2004, while in his early thirties he published his MA thesis, titled “United Worship in Chinese Christianity”.

He rose through the ranks in the Lianghui¹ at a young age serving as Secretary of CCC&TSPM in the Nanjing Office, Secretary, Vice Director and Director of the Department of Research for CCC&TSPM and as Associate Secretary

General of National Committee of TSPM.

His historical essay titled, “The Post-denominational era: The Chinese Church moves towards unity”, was published in the Nanjing Theological Review No. 3 (2009): 153. The essay was one of the winning entries for an essay contest on “Prospects for Ecumenism in the 21st Century” held by the World Council of Churches. According to WCC general secretary, the participants in the essay contest gave “hope, inspiration and leadership” to the ecumenical movement.” Gu’s essay described how China shifted away from denominationalism that was inherited from Western missionaries. He noted key steps in the process, such as the move toward united worship in 1958 and the principle of seeking common ground while retaining difference with mutual respect.

Gu has many roles in his current position as Secretary General of the TSPM. He liaises with parties from the United Bibles Society and Amity Press and builds relationship with

foreign Christian delegates. He is at the interface of the believing Church and the atheist government. Unsurprisingly, Gu is a proponent of the Sinicization of the Chinese religion. He stated, “This will encourage more believers to make contributions to the country’s harmonious social progress, cultural prosperity and economic development.”

This demonstrates the pressures on the church to become a political instrument for China’s peace and prosperity plans. However, the peace, prosperity and unity the CCP desires is being confused with the nature of the peace, prosperity and unity that Jesus and his apostles taught.

Gu Mengfei is very active on the international front in the area of interfaith dialogue and ecumenism. He is the Deputy Secretary-General of China Committee on Religion and Peace (CCRP). They are a member of Religions For Peace (RFP) International, which claims to be the world’s largest and most representative multi-religious coalition. Its aim is to advance common action among the world’s religious communities for peace. RFP works to transform violent

conflict, advance human development, promote just and harmonious societies, and protect the earth.

He was guest speaker at the Global Forum for the Future of World Christianity (GFFWC) where he spoke on “Diakonia in Changing Global Landscapes”. The Event was hosted by the Korean Institute for Future Ecumenism (KIFE), an organisation that calls itself a “global network hub that will contribute to the formation and networking of alternative forms of leadership for the future of the World Church.”

Clearly the heart of Gu Mengfei is concerned for global peace. But unifying the global church ultimately places it under a single umbrella, opening it to the same dangers that the TSPM faces – oversight by an organisation that neither respects the Word nor is in unity with the Holy Spirit.

¹(*Lianghui* is the Chinese term for ‘two organisations’. In the case of the Protestant Church it is referring to the China Christian Council (CCC) and the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM). Together they are known as the ‘*Lianghui*’ or CCC&TSPM)

Servants and Spies

A book by Mike Kastle

This is
Mike Kastle’s

* first book though he
has now written two more!

This is not just his life story (in itself an exciting adventure) but an essential read for anyone contemplating serving on the mission field. From Bible College graduate to church leader to Law School to a significant job in corporate America

PRAYER POINTERS

JULY 2021

China News Brief

Pray that the Lord will provide peace, safety, and provision for the families that have fled to Jeju Island.

Pray for China's aging people who will need to be provided for in the years to come.

Pray for the Christians who choose not to take the vaccine and therefore cannot attend church.

Praise God that the family planning policy is easing. This is great news!

As China's leaders deepen their connections and influence in the Middle East pray that they will have wisdom and discernment in their dealings with the regions volatile leaders. Pray for peace.

The Great Value of Pastors

Thank God for these willing workers in His kingdom.

Pray that they will be kept safe in their work and that He will encourage them.

Pray that they will be filled with His Spirit that they can grow in love, knowledge, wisdom and truth.

Pray that they will grow in the skills needed to pastor well.

Pray that the Lord will and be with them as they share his word in the villages.

Gu Mengfei 顾梦飞

Thank God for placing a man in authority who wants to see peace in China and the world.

Pray for Gu Mengfei that he has a deeper encounter with Jesus Christ and his life saving power.

Pray that Gu Mengfei will sanctified (set apart) through the Word of Truth and unified in Christ through the Word. (John 17:17-20)

Pray that the Lord will put good advisors around him and will give him Wisdom.

Cut out this note and slip it into your Bible to help you remember the July prayer topics for China



PRAYER POINTERS

Servants and Spies

Pray that Mike's aim of encouraging others to missionary service will be fulfilled through this book.

Pray for the work of the ministry he founded as it deals with changing Covid times and increasing persecution.

Pray for the unreached people his ministry works with – that many will come to know Jesus...

Missionary Preparation

Pray for Chinese church leaders to be actively involved in cross-cultural missions.

Pray that Chinese churches will prepare their cross-cultural workers before departure and continue to provide pastoral care for on-field and returning missionaries.

It is time for the Chinese church to repay the debt of the Gospel. Pray that Chinese believers will take the Gospel to the nations.

News From CCSM UK

Thank God for new Christians in China and for the faithful churches across the nation.

Ask God to be very real to all those who are facing persecution who have had their church closed and who face pressure to deny they belong to Christ.

Ask God to help you share about China with others you know, and to seek ways to raise up more faithful prayer servants.

Pray that the pastors we are supporting will be encouraged by the material support and able to lead their churches with Christ-like love and service.



Chinese Church Support Ministries

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

– life should have been good for Mike and his wife and family of four. Although loving the Lord and enjoying church life, he knew, in his own words, “the distance between God and me and his plan for my life seemed to be increasing.”

With a mission pedigree including a long serving missionary uncle in Africa, he felt that this option has passed him by – “too old at 40” he thought.

When a missionary about to go to China spoke at his church both Mike and his wife Karen were dismissive. “The last place we would ever want to go”. Then a church member asked if he would like to go on a mission trip to Kazakhstan and without any idea of what was involved he said yes.

What was involved was building work, assisting orphans and the homeless and his role was digging latrines! He wondered how this could be profitable in any way but you will read how this experience and the contacts he made changed his life!

Supported by his wife, Mike went on to establish an international ministry active in Russia, Kazakhstan, China and challengingly in North Korea. Through his corporate world contacts he was led to establish dental and medical based programmes – the miraculous ways God brought this about are just some of the miracles and signs following as Mike ‘gave God permission to change his heart’.



When he asked God to lay on his heart an unreached people group, he was shortly after invited to put together a medical team to work in a remote part of North West China. A region with many unreached minority peoples. Having set up an NGO in China to manage this growing work he realized he needed to leave his safe corporate world and move to China full time. The irony of his words years earlier “the last place we would ever want to go” were not lost on Mike and Karen!

Mike’s key advice to those feeling led to mission: “You will need to hand over everything to God.”

“It is a walk of faith that you must agree with the Lord to take day by day, week by weekwithout knowing the full picture or the end.” And quoting his uncle –the missionary from Africa – “there are only two things in life that last forever – the word of God and people”

Mike’s love for God is evident and this book is firmly grounded on scripture. His love for people is also clear – as is his servant heart. To find out how the spies fit in you will have to read the book!

** Mike Kastle is a pseudonym to protect his identity and the work of his on-going Ministry. Servants & Spies: Exploits from the Covert Mission Field, Paperback – August 21, 2020 by Mike Kastle.*

Available on Amazon and Kindle.

Missionary Preparation



A Chinese missionary who was trained in our China School of Missions 12 years ago, continued his theological training after his internship on the mission field. His church officially sent him as a missionary on his first two-year term.

He said:

“Owing to the pandemic, I was not able to return home. Two years ago, I obeyed God’s call and entered the mission field with God’s promises and the blessings of many people. The first thing I did was to focus on learning the language while familiarising myself with the customs and culture of the land and adapting to the new life. God’s timing is perfect. The waiting and equipping during the past ten years have turned into countless blessings. The first miracle was God’s financial provision over and above my needs for the two-year term. The second miracle was the unexpected approval of my missionary visa. The third, was passing the local language test with flying colours. I thank God for answering beyond what I could ask or imagine. The journey from doubt

and hesitation to obedience and faith has been filled with blessings and miracles. God is faithful and nothing is impossible with Him.”

Missionary candidates should seek the counsel of their church leaders, family and friends to confirm their call before stepping out of their comfort zone. The next step is preparation before departure which includes the following areas: training, spiritual growth, financial support, support group, mission agency/partner, language learning. When the missionary is on the field he has to adapt to the culture of his adopted country. The making of a missionary is a long process.

A few years ago, Ross Paterson, founder of Antioch Missions, Chinese Church Support Ministries, was invited to train Chinese missionaries in Egypt. One of the main leaders said that at least 1,200 Chinese missionaries were sent by their churches into Central Asia and the Middle East. These missionaries did not have any cross-cultural training prior to their

departure. Neither did they learn the language of the people group they were working with. They had problem surviving in the foreign land, finding affordable schools for their children and many of them faced marital issues. The pandemic has aggravated the situation and they could not even afford air tickets to return home.

Having spent over 40 years on the mission field, Ross and Christine Paterson understand the need for

support and teaching for missionaries and their supporting churches back home. They are working on an online portal of resources, training materials, courses and coaching for cross-cultural workers in the pre-departure, on field, and return stage of their work.

Please visit FieldPartner's websites – www.fieldpartner.org (English) and www.fieldpartner-chinese.thinkific.com (Chinese) to find out more.

News From CCSM UK



Prayer Legacy – is there such a thing? Can you leave a legacy of prayer, and if so how do you do that? I don't feel I am an expert in this, but believe there are two aspects of prayer that can be a legacy or leave a legacy.

We can pray! CCSM was started with prayer, and a desire to share what was happening in China, so that other Christians around the world could pray. So as we continue in prayer, we believe God hears our prayers and answers them, and things happen. So we leave a legacy of change, of the church in China growing and honouring God.

We also can encourage others to pray for

China, we can share the news from China and turn it into prayer. We can pray with others and model how to pray for the Kingdom of God to increase across China. So we leave a legacy of a passion for prayer. We hope to leave a legacy where we pass on the regular practice of prayer to others, who continue after we have gone.

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”
[Ephesians 6:18]

We have benefitted from the legacy of prayer that started in New Testament times, as Paul writes above, ‘pray on all occasions’, ‘always keep on



praying' challenging and encouraging the early church members to pray and pray and pray. So since then there has been a faithful continuation of prayer. We now join in with this legacy and will only see the full impact of this prayer when we see Jesus Christ face to face.

Two final thoughts:

1. Remember to bring praise to God, and thankfulness. He has done great things in China and we should continue to thank him.



2. Also prayer is not just us talking, it should help us hear God and act in mercy, generosity and service.

One way to be generous could be to donate towards our Pastor Support programme.

“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”
[Hebrews 13:15-16]

Richest Blessings,

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