



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

CHINA PRAYER LETTER



NOVEMBER 2021

News Briefs

Waves of Tension

The world's eyes have turned to Taiwan as military tensions rise between the island nation and China. Taiwan has its own elected government, constitution, and armed forces, and maintains that it will defend its democracy and independence. China claims Taiwan has always been part of China and it should be peacefully 'unified'. Few countries are in a position, economically or militarily, to debate with China's claim to ownership.

In early October war drums began to rumble when, in just one week, China flew 150 military jets into Taiwan's air defence identification zone. Nearby countries such as Japan are increasingly alarmed. Australia, USA and Britain are strengthening their military ties and have formed AUKUS to assist Australia develop nuclear submarine technology. Australia and China are no longer on political speaking terms.



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Then, on the 14th of October, China suddenly muffled the drums with an announcement it had applied to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), of which Australia is a prominent member. (The CPTPP is a reconstruction of the Trans-Pacific Partnership that was initiated in 2008 by the US, but later rejected by Trump.) Paradoxically, this trade pact was originally fashioned to withstand China's formidable trade influence. China's application to the trade agreement would seem to allay any fears it is about to take up arms. But tensions still ride high as Australia could yet veto the application, and CPTPP members would need to review China's commitment to compliance in many areas including labour rights. If China is accepted at the negotiation table, there is still room for more aggravation.

Shenzhen Holy Reformed Church

South Korea has, on October 5 and 6, declined asylum to eight Chinese house church Christians who fled to Jehu Island off Korea's coast. More than 60 members of Shenzhen Holy Reformed Church fled China hoping for a homeland where they could be free to worship according to their beliefs without harassment, raids, and interrogations they had been experiencing. Severe repercussions could follow if they are repatriated.

Christian Education Under Fire

Around half a dozen police raids on Christian academies and homeschool facilities have been reported since the recently announced "Administrative Measures for Religious Institutions" that came into effect on September 1. The targets included Abeka Academy of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province - (a popular US based Christian homeschool education program), a Christian school in Zhenjiang, Christian institutions in Wuxi, Foshan, and Zhijiang Covenant High School. This follows a raid on Maizi Higher Institute, a Christian music school of Harbin (Heilongjiang) the previous month. It's likely the raids are due to compliance issues around the new regulations.

ICC Report

International Christian Concern has put out their '[Persecution Incident Report: China](#)' [July 2020 to June 2021] and it confirms what we already know - that during the last year and during the pandemic, raiding and disbanding unregistered gatherings has been occurring across many provinces, notably Sichuan, Shanxi, Henan, Fujian, Guizhou, and Yunnan. Raids are not limited to meetings in church sanctuaries, but also virtual services or small group gatherings, which are seen as illegal. Together with the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau, local police and district offices have gone after these meetings whether they were at someone's home, in a rented hotel room, outside, or at a funeral home in the case

of funerals.

Grateful for the Commission

Chen Wensheng is an ex-drug addict from Hengyang City, Hunan Province, whose life changed when he became a follower of Jesus. He has become celebrated internationally as a fearless preacher of the Gospel. He was released this month after 15 days in detention - his 6th arrest this year - for illegal evangelizing, but has been arrested over 100 times! He displays the Father's love for the police and guards by sharing the good news with them too. A report from ChinaAid said that police warned Chen that his granddaughter's career could be affected by his refusal to stop preaching. Although he and his family are under pressure Chen keeps sharing. He says, "Thank you, God, for giving me the mission to spread the Gospel on earth, which is the meaning of my life...God can save people if we spread



t h e
G o s p e l .
Woe to me if I do
not preach the Gospel.”

More Control Over Family Life

A draft law is under review that will punish parents for very badly behaved children, or children that are convicted of crimes. The law will give authorities the power to force parents of offending children into family education programs.

Parents must make time for several of their children's daily activities, including rest, play and exercise. They must teach minors to "love the party, nation, people, and socialism," according to the bill. Although the law will have many positive outcomes, there are also concerns this law will be used to empower authorities to punish parents of children caught attending unregistered religious gatherings. In addition, there are fears it could be used to pressure Christians to teach infants material that conflicts with their beliefs.

International Short-Term Teams

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



A CCSM correspondent talks with Mary (not her real name), a leader in a New Zealand Chinese church, and a multiple CCSM Short Term Team member.

I met Mary recently over coffee and our conversation turned to her life in China before she migrated to New Zealand. Unexpectedly, I found that this unassuming and gentle lady had lived another very different life back in China. She seldom shares her courageous story as she finds most young people have no interest, and older Chinese don't want to discuss the historic events she took part in.

Her involvement in the student protests of 1989 was pivotal to her leaving China, and in her new homeland, she found a life changing faith. She believes it is proof that God had His hand on her life long before she knew there was a God!!

She is concerned, however, at this unwillingness of people to look back, and feels it is unhealthy to pretend these things did not happen.

Born in an east coast province of China, Mary was brought up in a small city

during the difficult times of the Cultural Revolution (1966 to 1976). The ration cards provided only just enough food and she remembers to this day that she often felt hungry, especially after school. Meat was rarely affordable, and the daily diet was porridge, rice and sweet potato.

In her early years there was no electricity, and water for winter bathing in the outside "bathroom" was heated on the wood fired stove. A daily job was to take out the toilet waste to the road to be collected by the hand drawn cart. But later they got electricity and a 9-inch black and white television – though there was only one channel to watch!

The family kept their heads down and avoided the worst aspects of the Cultural Revolution and she generally had a happy childhood. She remembers playing on the road (hardly any cars) and buying iceblocks with her pocket money for 3 cents. She walked to school each day with her friends.

Mary was a hard worker and got high grades in middle and high school. Later she was

accepted into a good university in the provincial capital. She became a campus representative of the Communist Party – her job was to look out for anyone speaking against the Government and report them. She did her job well and was highly regarded by party officials. So well in fact that on graduation she not only joined the Party but was asked to join the teaching staff as a student “mentor” reporting directly to the Party Secretary.

Whilst very much part of the campus Party system, she had begun to read more and more about international affairs particularly economics – her own major. She began to have doubts about what was happening in her own country both economically and politically. But she kept these thoughts to herself and had no idea if others thought the same.

On May 15th, 1989, she took a two-day train journey to Beijing to be interviewed for post graduate studies. But what happened there in the nation’s capital changed her future and is still never far from her thoughts. Her innocence was about to be shattered. Asian grasslands, and canal networks to the Mediterranean have also been rumoured, both world changing projects should they ever go ahead.

As the world enters a second period of cold war, it seems to be dividing into two distinct blocks, vying for dominance. Eurasia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in the East, and NATO and the EU in the West. China’s ties

w i t h
Russia are
strengthening
with largescale
joint military exercises in the
Ningxia Hui Autonomous region of
China being conducted in August.



Afghanistan is rich in minerals that China requires. Conversely, China has a lot to offer the long-suffering Afghan people who have endured war far too long. Roads, rail, energy projects and pipe lines would be mutually beneficial but require huge investments and loans. And no investor would throw money in without assurance of peace and security. Afghanistan may have little choice but to accept China’s assistance to rebuild, in combination with its version of security.

Certainly God, who puts leaders into power, can see more clearly into the future than mere man’s speculations. One thing He would probably want to bring to our attention, is the 40 different tribal peoples in Afghanistan’s mountains that do not have the Word in their language and the desperate need of the nation to hear the message of Jesus Christ. If there is a window of opportunity, however brief, let us prepare to partner with Chinese believers to reach them, and to assist the Afghanistan church. It was only earlier this year they told us they were planning on coming out of hiding.

How things have changed.

China's Unhealed Wound

Part 2

(continued...) A CCSM correspondent talks with Mary (not her real name), a leader in a New Zealand Chinese church, and a multiple CCSM Short Term Team member.

On arrival in Beijing (her first visit ever) Mary was stunned to find the university effectively closed with most of the students going daily to Tiananmen Square to protest. *Da zi bao* – large posters – were plastered everywhere. Mary found herself agreeing with their demands for free speech, democracy, and freedom of the press – all things she herself had come to believe in privately.

Invited to stay in a university dormitory, she, along with thousands of others from all over the city and from across China, cycled each day to Tiananmen Square. On the 19th May she joined thousands of students in a hunger strike. She stayed until 25th May when she reluctantly had to get back to work. In the chaos, she never did get her interview at the university.

If her visit to Beijing had been a week later this story may have had a very different ending! Mary says further evidence that God was protecting her even though she didn't know it.

Back in her hometown, some heavily censored news of the 4th of June events trickled through. (Soon, even this news

would abruptly stop). But for now, Mary was becoming increasingly angry and took to secretly listening to VOA (Voice of America) to get what she felt was more impartial news. Her experiences in Beijing haunted her and whilst she knew it would not end well, she decided she must take a stand. Later in June she led a large group of students and young teachers from her own university to the city centre. This time it was she who painted the *da zi bao* – protesting the death of many fellow students in Beijing. She does not know for sure, but she is convinced that some of the new friends she made in Tiananmen Square had died.

There were (as she knew there would be), consequences! She spent a year suspended from her work and was repeatedly forced to write and then read aloud self-criticism (*jiantao*). This throwback to the Cultural Revolution was humiliating but also confirmed in her heart that she needed to find a new life outside of China.

After 12 months, she was allowed to teach economics again, but she could see that her pathway forward would be forever obstructed. Authorities in China then and now have a long memory and it is hard to escape your *dang'an* (personal

PRAYER POINTERS

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Pray that believers in China will not be divided based on whether they are registered or unregistered, but that unity in the body will be based on the true and complete gospel. Pray that their love for one another in times of trial will be a witness to the world.

Pray for those whose ministries, jobs and livelihoods are affected by the Education crackdowns.

Thank the Lord for giving Chen a love for those that are charged with arresting and detaining him. Pray that he will have the right words and witness to bring many to faith.

Pray for the Shenzhen Holy Reformed Church members.

Pray that rumours of war will remain rumours only. Pray for Taiwan's peace and the ability to continue practicing faith freely. Praise God that He is the one who brings peace and calamity. Isaiah 45:17

Ask the Lord to help Chinese Christians raise their children to know him.

China's Unhealed Wound - Part 1

Pray that China will never again experience the terrible famine and poverty of the past.

Thank God that even though we may endure subjugation or hardship, the Lord has provided a gospel of freedom and sends us a Helper. Pray that His gospel will be heard in China.

Pray that Mary will have opportunities to share her reasons for trusting in the Kingship of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Praise God that He has a plan to heal the nations. [Rev 22:2]



PRAYER POINTERS

China's Unhealed Wound - Part 2

Pray for healing for those involved directly and indirectly by the events of June 4th, 1989.

Pray that such events will never again happen in China.

Pray for Mary and her ministry in New Zealand. May God give her peace and the ability to move on regardless of people's indifference.

Olive Tree Bible App Removed

Pray that the Olive Tree Bible App will be restored to Apple's China App Store.

Pray that God's Word will be available to all in China, and that the integrity of its translation will be upheld.

Pray for radio, alternative offline Bible apps such as the AppSTER, and other means of obtaining the Bible and study resources that are available for the casual inquirer, the curious as well as those that need to exercise caution to protect their jobs and families.

Pray that the West will learn from the Chinese Church how quickly the Bible can be taken from them. Pray that the Western church will not be taken unaware, when or if censorship strikes beyond China's borders.

News From CCSM UK

Give thanks for the many people praying for China and for the donations that enable support to reach those in need.

Give thanks we have easy access to the Bible and can be encouraged by God's word in our own language.

Pray that Chinese believers, especially new Christians can access a Bible and a supportive and Bible based church.

Pray that Chinese Christians will continue to be encouraged as they share their faith and that they see and experience God's protection and comfort.



Chinese Church Support Ministries

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

dossier).

And so, Mary, in 1995, by now married, found a way to leave and make a new start and a new life overseas. There she came to know Jesus and she knew that all that had happened had been with His knowledge and guidance!

She wishes that these events she experienced first-hand could be talked about more openly to bring healing to so many that were affected. She still has many university contemporaries in China whom she stays in contact with through WeChat.

Many are now in high Government positions, but no one talks about the student protests or anything else controversial for fear of repercussions. Her fellow “overseas Chinese” prefer not to think about it feeling they have moved on to a new and often prosperous life that they don’t want disturbed.

Most people who meet Mary see only a Godly, gentle and unassuming lady.

Few know about her more tumultuous past!



Olive Tree Bible App Removed



A report recently came to light that the US tech giant Apple had removed some popular religious apps from its Chinese App Store. Among them were the Christian “Bible App by Olive Tree”, the Muslim “Quran Majeed – ن ا ر ق ل ا” and “Jehovah’s Witnesses Kingdom” app.

After talking to Olive Tree, it became clear that in their case, Apple was not directly to blame for their take down. A spokesperson from Olive Tree explained:

“Olive Tree Bible Software was informed during the App Store Review process that we are required to provide a permit demonstrating our authorisation to distribute an app with book or magazine content in mainland China. Since we did not have the permit and needed to get our update approved and out to customers, we removed our Bible app from China’s App Store. We are currently reviewing the requirements to obtain the necessary permit with

the hope that we can restore our app to China’s App Store and continue to distribute the Bible worldwide.”

It should be pointed out that the Olive Tree Bible app was not in Chinese, but rather English. Although Olive Tree clarified that they, “have a few Chinese Bibles for sale for use within our App.”

Nevertheless, it will be interesting to follow this case, especially as Olive Tree Bible App is such a popular app in the West and boasts Greek and Hebrew scriptures and resources, along with many other Bible versions, commentaries, maps and study tools.

Apple currently has an estimated 14% share of China’s immense smartphone market and is privileged to be one of the few US companies to do so. Sadly, in order to maintain this position, it must bend to China’s censorship guidelines and be compliant to the demands the

Chinese authorities place upon it.

A small number of Bible apps remain available to Chinese believers. In-print Bibles have not been available for purchase on Chinese websites since March 2018, when China's largest online stores, including Taobao, Jingdong, Amazon.cn, and others, suddenly stopped showing results for searches for the Bible. They are available for purchase through state church bookshops, but purchases are monitored. An online, downloadable Bible is also available, once logged in, from the State's Three Self Church website.

Communist Party members, of which there are more than 95 million, who buy a print Bible or download a Bible app through legal means will struggle to do this anonymously. Once identified they could face Party discipline or face consequences in their careers. Likewise, students who reveal their faith are also now facing discrimination. Certainly China's surveillance is a deterrent to the curious, casual inquirer wanting to browse a copy of the scriptures.

News From CCSM UK



We have been encouraged by messages saying you are praying and by those who are themselves encouraging others to pray for China. We have been encouraged by the regular donations and the new unexpected donations. We are encouraged that out of the increasing reports of persecution of Christians in China, many Christians in the UK and around the world are praying more and more. We know prayer makes a difference, and helps us to focus on Jesus Christ, which honours him.

don't know the future but as the old hymn puts it 'we know who holds the future'. As we read the familiar verses in Romans 8, we are reminded that neither the future nor anything in the future can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus:

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:37-39

Do we know what lies ahead? No – we



Our ministry in China continues as we seek to do what God has called us to do. We face challenges because of travel and visa restrictions, but that does not prevent us supporting Christians in China as they live out their lives and witness for Jesus. Not only is praying achieving something now, but prayer can change us – the ones who pray.

Accordingly, some of you praying for China might be in the process of change – being made ready to go to China, to serve

in China. Be ready to step out when God calls!

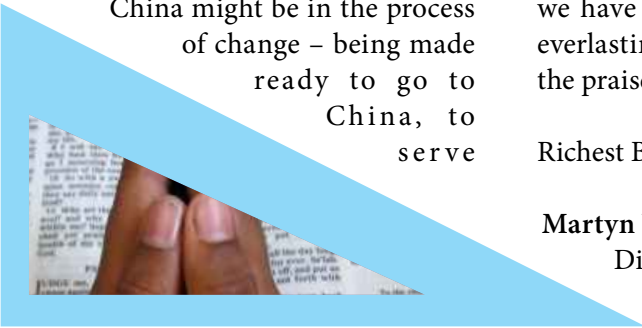
If your church or prayer group would like a visit or would like more information or resources to help you pray and join in serving the church in China, get in touch with us.

This short piece started with encouragement, give encouragement to others, and receive encouragement, we have a good God, a great God, an everlasting and faithful God. Give him the praise and honour.

Richest Blessings,

Martyn Wells

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