



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

CHINA PRAYER LETTER



DECEMBER 2021

Village Revolution

A CCSM Worker writes:

A revolution is taking place in remote villages across China. The Government's far reaching Rural Revitalisation Programme is using e-commerce (and lots of infrastructure money), to change sleepy, insular village life traditionally based on subsistence agriculture and small scale tourism.

Foreign and local missionaries, (including our CCSM workers) have generally focused on rural minorities who often have least access to the Gospel and minimal resources.

Our model has been based on getting initial access through small business or professional employment. Then, a long process of developing trust, learning the language and ultimately getting the opportunity to share our faith in Jesus Christ.

(This model is increasingly



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

problematic as the Government moves against any perceived foreign influence.)



Minority villages I visited from

2010 onwards were isolated, low tech and with basic amenities. Some of the villages had no road access – only rough walking pathways. Very little outside produce came in. Famously all toilets were of the squat variety and sometimes located in the ground floor pig pen! A challenge to the midnight visitor!

Those villages were noticeably missing a whole population group - young adults, who had gone to the cities to find work – part of the greatest “migration” in history.

The smart phone network, subsidized by the PRC, began the revolution, allowing parents to stay in contact with their “migrant” children.

New roads replacing footpaths have closed the gap between city and country.

And recently big tech has come to the villages.

NetEase, a massive Chinese gaming

company now has a pig rearing division using tracking sensors, big-data analysis and soothing music to keep the pigs happy. It oversees village farms from its base in Hangzhou.

Alibaba has developed an AI pig monitoring system that has produced startling increases in production.

In her book, “Blockchain Chicken Farm”, Xiaowei Wang visited a village – based Bubuji (Go Go Chicken) farm. Farmer Jiang’s organic, block chain chickens have QR codes and with the purchase price of US\$40 comes a complete history of each bird with a video highlighting its happy free-ranging life! A Shanghai company provides the technology to this long established farm.

Many villages now have manufacturing cooperatives with all residents able to take part. The product may be souvenirs, clothes or organic fruit and vegetables with blockchain certification. Again Alibaba is at the centre of these developments through its “Rural Taobao Strategy.”

How will these developments impact Christian missionaries? Access to villages will become more difficult with increased Government presence and surveillance.

Increasingly materialistic villagers will likely be more resistant to the Gospel. But in the same way that Mao Zedong’s massive roading projects opened up the whole Nation to missionaries, so will this

technology highway provide new access to the rural community. Whilst WeChat has obvious security issues, it is still being used widely by Chinese churches for outreach, Bible study and worship.

God has historically used man's plans (and inventions) to His glory and will do so again in the village harvest fields of China!

Christmas in China

CCSM December Teams to China have always provided a great opportunity to introduce Jesus and explain the true meaning of Christmas. University students especially are challenged by the message of hope which is something they crave for in their own lives.

Our English teachers always prepare special Christmas lessons and love our help with small group discussions. Outside of the classrooms, we lead all kinds of programmes including Christmas parties and carol singing in cafes – always aiming to have one-on-one conversations.

With current travel restrictions we are really missing this special opportunity that God has used so fruitfully over the years. We are looking forward to going back in 2022!

Until recently, Christmas had a growing commercial profile in China though this is in decline as it is perceived to be a foreign cultural festival which the Government frowns upon. Our workers in China however, report there are still some decorations appearing in the malls this year and carols are being played in Starbucks in one north western city! Christmas trees have been spotted in downtown hotels.

International Short-Term Teams

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



There are some unique ways that Christmas is observed in China.

Beiji Village in Heilongjiang (the northernmost town in China) has a Christmas theme park offering sleigh rides with Santa and a Santa Post Office.

Students across China celebrate Christmas by giving their friends apples. Apple in Chinese is pingguo which sounds a little like ping'an - peace.

Santa looks similar to the one we see in the West but in a special Chinese twist he is often seen playing a saxophone. It is unclear where this tradition came from.

And in Yiwu City (Zhejiang Province), an area called "Santa's Workshop" produces more than 60% of the worlds Christmas decorations. When you buy your Christmas decorations this year it is highly likely they came from Yiwu.

Being in China at Christmas time is always special. As we shared carols and scriptures we often saw an

anointing come over the meeting with students being moved to tears by the presence of the Holy Spirit. So popular were these events that sometimes we needed to do a number of repeats to cater for all who wanted to be part of it. University students literally queued up outside to wait for the next "show"! It was also common for curious students to ask if they could go to a church at Christmas to "see what happens". We were often able to arrange this – sometimes with eternal consequences!

Local Christians of course make the most of the season. They hold special concerts and Christmas parties giving out literature and preaching the gospel message. It is a tribute to the courage of church leaders that they continue to celebrate Christmas as an outreach opportunity in spite of increasing opposition from the State.

Pray that those who come to events this Christmas will come to know the One who is the really giver of hope, joy, peace and life.

December Briefs

Flights at 2%

Any hope of China throwing open its borders to the world in the next few months is unlikely. Flights into China are at 2.2% of pre-COVID levels and the great majority of these are cargo flights. Only 408 scheduled international passenger flights to and from the country per week will be permitted in the winter season ending in March next year.

Vietnam Evangelists

Good news. It appears Vietnamese Christians have been busy sharing the gospel with their Chinese neighbours. BitterWinter.org has reported that Villages in China's Ningming county, Guangxi Province, which borders Vietnam have received visits from "Legal Education" officers distributing propaganda material and warning villagers against "infiltration" of *xie jiao* (loosely translated as 'evil cults') and "illegal religion" from Vietnam. The region is home to the Mien ethnic group, (known by Han Chinese as "Yao" meaning 'savage'). They have reported increased surveillance of their villages by border police. Some said they are afraid that, under the pretext of fighting *xie jiao*, the current campaign will increase the surveillance of *all*



religious activities. In the last couple of years, authorities have often bundled the underground Christian church with the designation of *xie jiao*. Doing so, opens them up to further, and often harsher, penalties.

Xinjiang Ongoing

Christians can expect to feel the impact of the next wave of religious persecution planned for Xinjiang Province, the ancestral home of the Uyghur (turkic) people who traditionally follow the Muslim faith. A new law titled "Regulations of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on the Construction of Public Safety" is due to come into force on January 1, 2022. The regulations itemize four priorities for security - and religion features strongly. Authorities are to "accurately deepen the fight" and "crack down" on religious extremist forces, illegal

religious activities, religious propaganda and religious network transmission. They must also prioritise the promotion of deradicalisation. The last of the four priorities is to “carry out anti-*xie jiao* propaganda and education, prevent and crack down on various *xie jiao* organizations, and perform a good job in the re-education and transformation through education of citizens connected with *xie jiao*.”

Surveillance will be further increased along with a “full implementation” in the XUAR of the grid system. The system was created for the cities, but is gradually being extended out to rural areas, but with larger grids. In 2021 each grid team has added an officer in charge of seeking out illegal religion and *xie jiao*. [Source: BitterWinter.org]

Anti-*xie jiao* and anti-“illegal religion” initiatives seem to be appearing at other locations around the country and unfortunately this will likely mean unregistered Christian believers are being caught up in these drives and sent to reeducation or so-called civilization practice stations.

Script Killing

Also on the topic of *xie jiao*, on November 9, the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism published a draft of “Regulations on Controlling the Contents of Script Killing and Secret Room.”

These two offline games have become extremely popular. “Script killer” is a whodunit-style game in which players meet, are assigned roles and act out a script to find the murderer. Secret Room is a puzzle-solving role playing game. The new regulations safeguard the copyright of scripts and regulate their content. They require that the scripts be submitted for examination by the Municipal Bureau to ensure they do not violate the state’s religious policies and do not promote *xie jiao* or superstitions.”

Broad bytes

Panic buying became widespread in November after a government directive to stock up for winter sparked fears of more lockdowns, food shortages and price hikes. China’s population is expected to halve in 45 years! Women are being encouraged not to migrate to cities, but to marry locally. Sabre rattling between East and West continues with unveiled threats of a Taiwan invasion by China. From the beginning, China has run a zero-tolerance Covid policy and repeated lockdowns have induced economic downturn, and a teetering property sector. Citizens of the southwestern city of Ruili, have been very vocal online about the trauma they are subject to. One baby was said to have been tested 74 times, other residents have insufficient food and no access to healthcare. Businesses have collapsed. By mid November China had fully vaccinated 75.2% of its population.

PRAYER POINTERS

DECEMBER 2021

Village Revolution

Pray that missionaries will develop new strategies to continue to reach the rural minority and Han communities.

Praise God that technology is a two edged sword that can serve, not just disrupt Kingdom purposes.

Pray that missionaries with a love for ethnic minorities will not be discouraged but go forward on their knees knowing God has not abandoned the rural communities.

Christmas In China

Pray for the local churches as they celebrate Christmas. Give them innovative plans to reach out to their communities with the message of hope.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will use the limited public celebration in China to challenge hearts to seek out the true meaning of this season.

Pray for safety for those already planning outreach events that they will proceed without attracting the attention of officialdom.

December Briefs

So much in the news seems to be causing division and isolation. East is divided from West. Uyghur from Han. Vaccinated from unvaccinated. TSPM from the underground church. Praise God that there is unity in Christ and that He is working out his plan.

Pray for the unregistered believers in China. Pray for their peace and their continued growth in the Lord, that they will be able to hold onto their sure hope in times of trial.

Pray for Xinjiang. Pray for the radio networks that minister into the Province.

Pray for those who are being denied the truth of the gospel. Pray that all may have opportunity to hear.

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



PRAYER POINTERS

The Question of UBI - Part 1

Praise God that He cares about the poor, the orphaned and the widows.

As the world's leaders and influencers attempt to correct the imbalances in global economies, and to experiment with new ideas, pray for wisdom for China's leaders, who have the responsibility of their people on their shoulders.

Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another." Pray for believers in China that they may be known by their love one for another - whether in the TSPM or unregistered church, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, in good times and in bad.

The Question of UBI - Part 2

Thank the Lord God that poverty in China is being addressed.

Pray that the Chinese government will be able to govern its vast resources wisely for the good of all its people.

Pray that Christian brothers and sisters who have been subjected to re-education or who are wrongfully considered a threat to stability will find peace in their predicament.

Pray that any surveillance and monitoring of their actions will only seek to bring them favour and afford honour to the Lord.

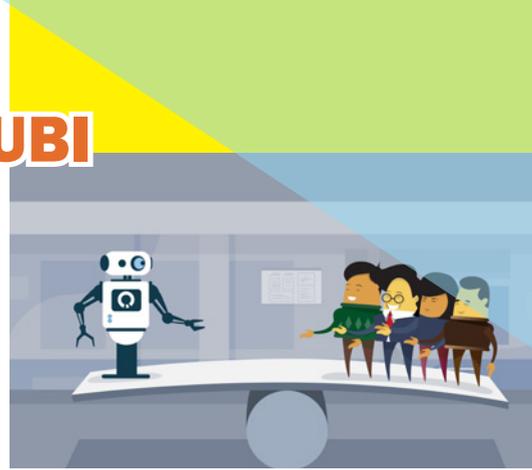


Chinese Church Support Ministries

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

The Question of UBI

- Part 1



“Robots and technological advances will soon replace jobs and cause mass layoffs and social unrest!” Or so say the 4th Industrial Revolution automation alarmists. Other experts strongly disagree, pointing to China which had shown 5 years of rising employment rates just *before* the pandemic, and the UK which had obtained it’s highest rate of employment in 40 years! - despite increasing technology. But now, the virus has devastated the labour market and there is a hot debate raging around the world as to how such a crisis can best be addressed.

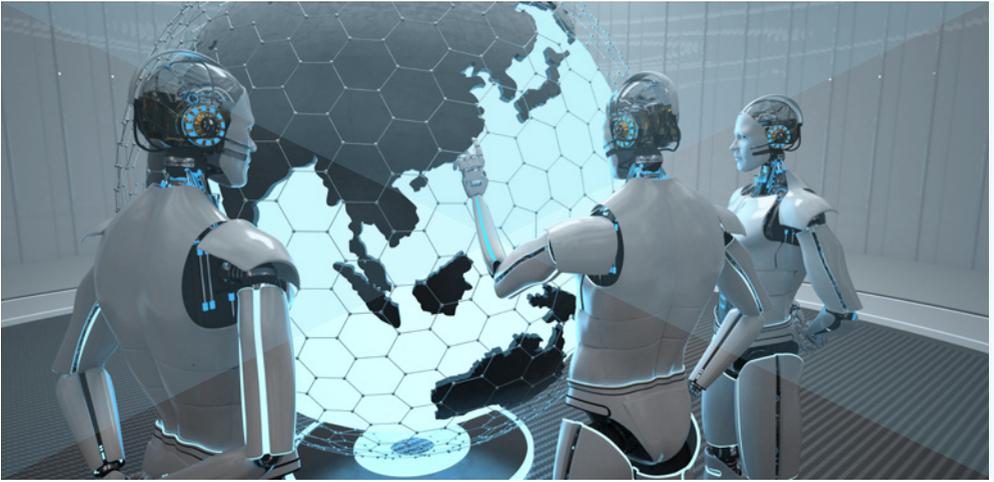
Universal Basic Income (UBI) is at the heart of many of these debates, but if you have not heard of UBI, you are not alone. In its pure form, UBI can be summed up as unconditional, non-targeted (no means test), and equal, cash payouts from a government to all their citizens (i.e. universally) to spend as they will.

Of course, immediately, this would appeal to anyone financially suffering from the pandemic. People need security now to pay their bills, help to get them back on their feet, to retrain or relocate to a new job. And if everyone became a beneficiary there would be no stigma. Fabulous! The concept appeals to progressives (equality

and equity), libertarians (no means test) and feminists (financial independence and self autonomy) and it would provide a cash stimulus to resuscitate dying economies. Ideologues on both the right and the left are seriously considering the concept.

When UBI has no targeted groups to identify, or follow up, no conditions to vet, the administrative costs are minimal and the response time is rapid compared to other social safety nets. As the UN likes to say, “no one is left behind.”

In a less pure form, UBI can have many parameters....not all apples are alike. And there can be progressive steps to attaining full UBI. Depending on a country’s policies, the amount paid out might be a living wage or just a small help up. It could be permanent, short term or a one-off payment. It may be part of a wider social security scheme, in conjunction with other benefits and targeted assistance, or it could replace them all.



You might be surprised to know that over fifty experiments have already been run in nations all around the world. For example, America introduced the Child and Dependent Tax Credits (CTC).

In Alaska, citizens own some of the country's natural resources and any profits generated are shared as a social dividend. In 2017, Finland launched a two-year plan giving monthly payments to 2,000 unemployed citizens. Brazil has a cash transfer system for families that is conditional on factors like children being vaccinated and sent to school.

Overwhelmingly, the biggest question of all in the global debate is - "Can we afford it? Who pays for the free lunch?"

A major American proponent, former presidential hopeful, Andrew Yang believes taxing Amazon could pay for it, but currently companies like this can simply shift country.

Redistributing funds from inheritances and housing sales has been mentioned. Carbon or energy tax is considered another instrument of funding. These would sit on top of the existing taxes. Where it replaces benefits, pensions or other social assistance, those funds could then be transferred to the UBI.

The thing on which all proponents agree is that to have a UBI there must be a robust payment mechanisms and a unique ID for each individual.

It's also been suggested that eligibility could be ruled out by age (possibly excluding children), citizenship (or residency), and felony.

Please note that opinions expressed in this article are not a reflection of CCSMs views, but are provided to shed some light on the landscape in which we live today and to invite prayer for the future.

The Question of UBI

- Part 2

In the last few years we have seen China roll out the *Dibao*, the Minimum Livelihood Guarantee Programme. Being a means tested cash transfer, it is not universal, but it is unconditional in how it can be spent. *Dibao* has operated alongside the very successful Poverty Alleviation Drive.

Different localities in China set their regional *Dibao* level (essentially the poverty line) and payments are made to top up an eligible person's income to that amount. In theory, anyone below the *Dibao* line is eligible, but in reality the funds are not always there to meet the numbers so local administrators must decide between candidates and may draw on community feedback to assist them in their selection.

Some localities require families update their income and wealth information every three to six months.

Author, Dr. Jennifer Pan set out to research the *Dibao*. What she discovered has been published in her book, "Welfare for Autocrats: How Social Assistance in China Cares for its Rulers". She soon noticed that the desperately poor in urban China - those unable to work or obtain family support - were often missing out in favour of a more well-off family

with a member identified as having a high propensity to be a security risk. So rather than being ineligible for the scheme, those thought likely to engage in destabilizing activities or crimes in the future, such as ex-inmates, were actively being targeted.

Pan links this phenomena to a Sept 2001 Document released called, "Opinions in Further Strengthening Comprehensive Management of Public Security" which stated that all bureaucracy needs to work together in a coordinated way to manage public security and political order. This included the Labour, Civil Affairs, Education, Health, Family Planning and Social Security departments.

China's grass roots informants have played a large part in selecting who may be a risk of terrorism, separatism or religious extremism. Today this role is moving into the realm of big data and machine learning.

Dibao recipient lists are publically displayed. Dr. Pan explained that *Dibao* facilitates repeated, frequent interaction between authorities and recipients and facilitates surveillance and monitoring, both from neighbourhood administrators and neighbours.



The question has been asked if the *Dibao* could be extended to become a universal payment in China.

To answer this, researchers have sought to understand how a UBI would be accepted and applied in light of Chinese culture.

They used traditional surveys, and even used the novel

approach of gathering insight through online gaming apps created for the purpose. What they discovered was that the frugal Chinese would tend to save the extra income, and this would counteract any advantage the payouts would have in boosting the economy. Looking ahead, that issue might be solved by shortening the expiration date on the new digital currency.

All in all, the consensus is that even a modest nationwide universal basic payment is currently completely unaffordable in China.



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