



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

CHINA PRAYER LETTER



January 2022

Booksellers Pay Heavy Price

Two separate cases of Christians receiving exceedingly hefty penalties for selling Christian books have been in the news lately.

In August 2021, Chang Yuchun (53) and his wife Li Chenhui (44) were convicted of running a company without a license and 'inciting subversion of state power'. They had been printing and selling Christian literature through their printing company for five years before it was shutdown by authorities in July 2021. The couple were given seven years in prison and fined 250,000 yuan each - a combined total of around US\$78,000 or £60,000. Their four children are now living with their elderly grandparents. They appealed the verdict on the basis that the penalty was disproportionately harsh,



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but on the 16th November 2021, the appeal was rejected. [Source: ChinaAid].

Back in September 2019 another



bookseller, Chen Yu(陈煜), also known as Zhang Xiaomai (张小麦), was arrested for selling Christian books online through his "Xiao Mai Study Room". In October 2021 he was convicted and sentenced to a seven-year prison sentence and fined 200,000 yuan. He was accused of selling foreign-published religious material and found guilty of 'illegal business operation'.

Human Rights advocate, ChinaAid, recently published a letter written by Zhang Xiaomai from detention. Addressed to his parents, it said, "In the past two years, what have I lost? I temporarily lost the times with my family, but I did not lose love for my family; I temporarily lost my freedom, but I did not lose the freedom of thought; I temporarily lost my Sundays, but I did not lose my faith." From prison, Xiaomai joins with his family in prayer at five o'clock each afternoon. Although separate by distance they are not separated in Spirit.

Read more of Zhang's story and

more from his letter here: <https://www.chinaaid.org/2021/12/appeal-for-christian-bookstore-verdict.html>

In both of these cases, those supplying the Christian literature were aware that there could be a cost in doing so. They also knew the great value of books as a tool to leading people to faith and for strengthening and growing the Church. There will be differing views on whether they should have followed their conscience and continued to offer these books, or whether they should have obeyed the authorities. And on this matter I am quick to listen to the apostle Paul's advice on matters of conscience in Romans 14. "Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand."

Please hold up these brothers and sisters, and their families, in prayer as they have a harsh punishment to bear. And consider joining with Zhang Xiaomai, and his family and supporters, at 5pm in lifting up the church and people of China.



January Briefs

Chinese New Year Approaches

The Tiger is known as the king of all beasts in China and 2022 is a year of the Tiger, starting from February 1st. It is a Water Tiger year. Expect to see many Chinese children wearing tiger suits and hats! The New Year marks the beginning of spring, and “new year” in Chinese is “chun jie,” which translates to “spring festival.” Chinese New Year celebrations are performed to drive away all the bad luck and ill fortunes from the previous year. It’s an opportunity for a fresh start.

Historically, China has used both solar and lunar calendars, and both played a part in daily life, helping to determine the seasons and the ideal time to plant crops. The date of the Chinese New Year changes each year, from late January through mid February on the Gregorian calendar.

CCP National Conference on Religion

The last time President Xi Jinping called China’s top leaders together for a National Conference on Religion was in 2016, and unfortunately, this meeting was the prelude to what became a devastating chapter for the family churches and house churches of China. And for the official state churches, it was the precursor to further restrictions, controls, overbearing requirements and monitoring . It was after that meeting that the church began to feel the effects of Xi Jinping’s “Sinisization of religion”.

In December 2021 a second such meeting was convened, and the take away message from Xi Jinping this time is that “China must adhere to the direction of the sinicisation of religion, and insist on uniting the masses of religious believers

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USA Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns

around the party and the government.”

He stressed the importance of adopting a holistic view of national security in religious work, and of “strengthening the management of online religious affairs.” There are fears that Xi Jinping now wants to go beyond just restricting religious websites and online distribution of religious material and go a step further into monitoring and controlling all religious online commentary.

Xi stated, “Religious activities should be carried out within the scope stipulated by laws and regulations … and should not interfere with educational, judicial and administrative affairs as well as social life,” Xi said.

USA appoints Ambassador to China

R. Nicolas Burns was nominated by the Biden Administration in August 2021, to serve as Ambassador to China. The nomination was sent to the Senate on September 13. Republican Marco Rubio stalled Burns’ nomination, citing his business relationships in China. Burns was confirmed by

the Senate on December 16, 2021. He has an impressive, varied and extensive portfolio as a statesman, which includes the positions of U.S. Ambassador to Greece and U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, National Security Council at the White House, membership in the Trilateral Commission, Executive Director of the Aspen Strategy Group and Aspen Security Forum, Senior Counselor at the Cohen Group, and the Board of Directors of Enteiris, Inc.

Burns is a gifted public speaker and columnist. He served in the American Consulate General in Jerusalem (1985-1987) where he coordinated U.S. economic assistance to the Palestinian people in the West Bank. He is a passionate proponent of a two state solution for Israel and Palestinians. He also serves on the boards of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and the Appeal of Conscience Foundation (an interfaith coalition of business and religious leaders that claims to promote peace, inter-religious cooperation and ethnic conflict resolution.) Burns has held many other illustrious positions ...too many to include here.

CPEC - A Complicated Friendship

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) begins at Kashgar in Xinjiang, China, and ends in Pakistan's Balochistan Province at the port of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea. A Chinese state-owned corporation, China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC), holds the 40-year lease on the port. Billions have been borrowed by Pakistan and invested by China to develop the corridor between the nations. This "Friendship Highway" is projected to benefit both countries, and relies heavily on safe passage and security to be a success.

Unfortunately the very measures used to safeguard the project are causing the friendship to be tested. In Balochistan, curbs on border trade with Iran, security check-posts, the military presence, and frequent security-related shutdowns of internet and cell services, had made the people's lives unbearable. In fact, the year before, it was only a public backlash that prevented parts of the city from being fenced off with barbed wire.

From mid November and into December 2021, Gwadar residents staged mass sit-in protests, and blocked the highway connecting Gwadar to



Karachi. Their primary grievance was that the livelihood of many had been either completely cut off or adversely affected by the port, the expressways or the security measures, and that there had been no benefit to them in return. The numbers were huge, causing the Balochistan government to send in 5,500 riot police, in addition to the permanent security force, but they were given no occasion to act, as protestors remained calm and peaceful. Women and children also protested - incredible in such a conservative culture. And people from surrounding areas also joined in.

The protestors were not aiming to expel the Chinese or close down the port. Rather they had valid concerns and were determined to have them addressed by the Pakistan authorities. 40,000 jobs were promised by the project but locals complained that the majority of workers employed

by COPHC are from outside Gwadar. Compensation to locals had originally been promised in the form of an airport, medical and education facilities and other infrastructure. Yet, six years later, much of what was promised has not been delivered. 100,000 people in Gwadar remain without access to clean drinking water. Electricity outages were a regular occurrence. Without basic amenities the city could not draw in business, boost its economy or provide jobs.

These issues existed before the Chinese built the port, and relations between Balochistan and Pakistan's Central Government have historically been extremely tense. Chinese have reason to ask for strong security. According to AsiaTimes, "insurgents have been killing Pakistan's security forces in the region – and workers on projects managed by China – almost daily." Balochistan separatists have begun to view Chinese projects, and the influx of people that come with them, as a threat to any future independence or autonomy for their province.

For the locals of Gwadar, the port has simply made daily life more difficult. 65% of the town earned their livelihoods from the sea and many have had access restricted or cut off from their traditional fishing waters. On top of that, deep sea trawlers are poaching and foreign vessels have been given licenses to fish by their own federal officials. China vehemently denies all illegal fishing as fake news, but a Gwadar fishermen's

alliance says it confirmed last July that "fish caught near Gwadar" were on board detained Chinese trawlers.

Despite a tight media blackout, the scale and persistence of the Gwadar protests left the Pakistan authorities with no choice but to acknowledge and address the crowds demands, which in fact were very reasonable and achievable.

China has been quick to reiterate its goodwill to the region. The East Eastbay Expressway is being built with a zero interest loan. And a Chinese company will be donating 75 fishing nets worth 100,000 yuan. Rs33.827 billion has been granted toward Gwadar International Airport which is 90% complete expected to open in 2023. And a 150-bed hospital was 20% built and is expected to begin service next year and two training centers were in operation. Its unlikely there will be any more slowing down of these projects.

China, Pakistan and other potential investors in Gwadar's "Special Economic Zone", have been sent a strong message. Economic development is also an investment into community. And trust and friendship must be earned. The disgruntled crowds had made serious threats to close the port if their demands were not addressed, but thankfully, after 28 days, Pakistan's Prime Minister has now given assurance that their legitimate concerns have been heard.

PRAYER POINTERS

JANUARY 2022

Booksellers Pay Heavy Price

Praise the King of Kings, the Living God. Give thanks that, as his servants, we will stand before Him and give an account individually for our decisions.

Pray that “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” [Romans 14:17] will always be at the heart of decisions made by China’s Christians, whether they be part of the state church or the unregistered.

Pray that the Christians in China will always have access to the complete and true Word of God.

Pray that any attempts to alter, add to, or censor the Word of God will fail.

January Briefs

Praise God that every day is an opportunity for a fresh start in Christ.

Pray for the Chinese Christians who may be about to experience yet heavier restrictions to their online expressions of faith and fellowship.

Praise God that His plans for His Church are good and that He has told us the end from the beginning.

“Then the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints (believers) of the Most High; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.” [Daniel 8:27, Amplified]

Pray for the people of China.

CPEC - A Complicated Friendship

Pray for protection of Chinese workers along the China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Pray for friendship and peace between the people of Pakistan and China.

Pray for opening up and opportunities for cross cultural missions

Pray that authorities and investors will not trample on the rights of the poor.



PRAYER POINTERS

Feed My Sheep

Thank you Lord that You raise up men for Your purposes. Thank you Lord for the life of Eddie Cairns.

Eddie would often pray, “Thrust me out, Lord”. Pray for courage and boldness in outreach.

Two verses (harnessed together in love, activated in obedience and then empowered by the Holy Spirit) would be Eddie’s source for many years. They were: “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”[Matthew 9:38, NKJV] and “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” [Luke 9:62, ESV]

Pray for the harvest fields in China. Pray that the labourers already working will be strengthened and encouraged.

Thank our Lord that it is through Him and by Him that we are valued. When our works are limited or seem ineffective (as individuals or as a church), pray that we might truly know His love for us.

Reforming the Reformed

Give praise to God that He continues to build His church His way.

Pray for the leadership that they may do a good job at training those under their care in ministry and small group leadership roles.

Pray for the Lord’s leading in areas concerning women’s roles.

Pray for the safety of church members and pastors using the internet to fellowship, share and learn together.

News from CCSM UK

Please pray that 2022 will be a significant year for service in and to China

Please pray that we can continue to work in partnership with our brothers and sisters across China.

Please pray that existing doors will remain open and new doors will open to allow partnerships to flourish and extend the Kingdom of God

Pray that we can model acceptance to one another in the UK especially for those who are feeling rejected or struggle to be accepted.



Chinese Church Support Ministries

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

Feed My Sheep

It was with great sadness that we heard of the passing of Brother Eddie Cairns, aged 86. We mourn the loss of this inspiring man of courage and faith. His life brimmed over with the fulfillment and adventure of a life walked with the Lord.

This kind and humble New Zealander played a very important part in the history of the Chinese Church. For those that do not know, Eddie was one of the crew members on board Michael, the tug boat that took part in Project Pearl. At the time, 1981, Bibles in China had been destroyed in the Cultural Revolution and were impossible to obtain. In this highly dangerous mission, Michael left Hong Kong sailing north, towing a barge laden with 232 tonnes of Bibles.

Eddie had spoken of the identity documents strapped around his waist, in a watertight wrap, in case they were shot by the gun boats they passed by. But by God's grace, they reached their destination safely, a secluded beach in heavily guarded communist China. The underground believers were waiting under cover of darkness, and the Bibles were quickly offloaded and dispersed throughout the country.

No doubt he would want to give tribute to the estimated 20k Christians waiting on the shore who received these Bibles, took them, and multiplied the seed



within them. It was during this period that the Chinese Church grew exponentially.

Eddie was strong on the point that Christians should not seek to shame the authorities in China. Even though Project Pearl itself put the crew at risk of punishment under Chinese Law, their focus was not to criticize the government's treatment of believers but simply to 'feed the sheep', a commandment from Christ himself.

Nevertheless, Project Pearl showed the entire world how hungry China's believers were for the Word of God, and inadvertently paved the way for Bibles to be legally printed in China.

Eddie founded Mission Outreach (MO), an organisation that later took teams into China to intercede. MO sought to discover the needs of believers in remote and restricted minority areas, and intrepid teams delivered freshly translated scripture, music and other resources to the very grateful believers in these regions. Although MO was not focused solely on China, it

regularly prayed for the nation and its people. From North Korea to communist Europe, it would be impossible to mention here, all the restricted nations Eddie had visited in order to find the believers, strengthen and encourage them, and report back their practical and spiritual needs.

Eddie was known for his love for God, his great heart for people, and his passion for the church. He kept a scrap book filled with photos of people he had met, and that God had placed on his heart. He laid it out before the Lord daily in prayer.

In his later years, Eddie suffered two strokes that abruptly ended his active and prolific life of missions. Being unable to continue his passion to serve the Lord in this way was very difficult for Eddie. He had always assumed he would “die in the field with his boots on”. It was during these years that he came to truly know it was not what he did, but who he was in Christ, that gave him any value and purpose.

*Edward (Eddie) Roy Cairns, 28 May 1935
- 2 December 2021*

Reforming the Reformed

China Source recently translated a report from Gudao (pseudonym), a house church pastor from within China. Gudao considers the effects of the 2018 Revised Religious Regulations, combined with the Covid-19 pandemic on China’s Reformed House Churches. We take a look at some of the new trends he has identified.

Gudao pointed out that Reformed Churches had placed a lot of weight on the public reading of the Word, church sacraments, corporate worship, and a dedicated place of worship with a full-time pastor and choir. Now they have had to come to grips with smaller, less visible gatherings, often within families. Concepts of what is ‘proper’ worship have been challenged. Whereas before the changes, the size of the church membership, and church constitu-

tions and regulations were important, now the focus has moved to correct preaching of the word, the carrying out of the sacraments, prayer, fellowship and even shared meals.

Because they are restricted in their ability to do local outreach, the church groups now have more time to focus on strengthening the foundations of their faith. There is more teaching of doctrine, more reading of scripture and prayer. Pastors have revived the study of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and the Confession of Faith. Gudao said that pastors were sharing their study notes online with each other.

Rather than a single leadership team, churches are now faced with the need to appoint, train and nurture many lead-

ers for the small groups. To meet this great challenge women have been enlisted into group leadership roles and even preaching roles. This has been quite a reversal for some Reformed churches which had been previously been moving to forbid women from these positions.

Because the current environment prevents church organisers from planning events and activities, the focus has returned to discipleship, ministry training and equipping of group leaders and host families.

Gudao noted that because of the pandemic, suddenly the churches had started to pay more attention to missions. He said, “Many online mission activities

have sprung up rapidly, including online evangelism training meetings and online prayer meetings with a focus on missions.” It seems that the withdrawal of foreign mission organisations has left a gap that has encouraged local churches to see the need and rise to meet it.

What is surprising in Gudao’s report is that the internet clearly remains a tool of communication within the house churches, despite the threat of surveillance.

For Gudao’s full report please visit ChinaSource. [<https://www.chinasource.org/resource-library/articles/recent-characteristics-of-reformed-churches-in-china>]

News from CCSM UK



Happy
New Year!
What will 2022
bring? We thank God
that He knows and He cares!

We put our trust in Him for our personal lives, for our work and ministry and for His church in China.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one

another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

[Romans 15: 5-7]

Pressures from illness, pressures from uncertainty in the UK and around the world can make us fearful, and fear can lead to selfishness and distancing from others. It is especially at these times that we need to encourage and accept one another.

These verses direct us to receive God’s endurance and encouragement and also receive the attitude of mind that accepts one another, rather than focus on the differences. We should be encouraging unity and acceptance,



as this will glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a way of demonstrating love, which can be especially significant for refugees and those who are on the edges of society. Let us do all we can to express love and acceptance in this coming year.

There are many voices expressing the view that work in China has changed and will not quickly return to the openness that was there four or five years ago.

One suggestion is that we need to develop even more our partnerships with churches and

Christian groups in China. A partnership is two way, we listen and learn in addition to offering support and resources. We seek to provide what is needed in China now as we listen and are open to the church there.

In many ways this is no different to the way we have always operated, but the hostile environment for Christians in China reinforces the need to work with the Chinese church, as they go through persecution and challenge. We want to seek ways to continue to serve and continue to work in partnership.

Richest Blessings,
Martyn Wells,
CCSM UK Director



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