



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

CHINA PRAYER LETTER



APRIL 2022

Statement of Father's Love

Mercy Ministry has always been a large part of CCSM's work. It is a service to Christ, just as much as for those who receive the care or assistance. In fact, Jesus made it clear that He takes it personally when His people help their brothers and sisters. In His words: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." [Matt 25: 35-36]

Like any country, China has its share of disabled, and historically has struggled to care for them well. In fact, only a few years ago, the term used to describe them, *canfei ren*, literally meant "disabled garbage people." How far China has come! The nation is actively making efforts to change its long-ingrained misconceptions of people with disabilities, both



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mental and physical. And certainly, events like the recent Winter Paralympics offer profound benefit in raising public appreciation of the challenges faced by the less able bodied.

Watching the games from their homes and institutions, young people with disabilities are encouraged by events like these. When they see others with similar challenges to themselves, attaining impossible goals and dreams, they are encouraged to expand their vision for their own lives.

Not long ago, it was very uncommon to see disabled people in the streets. They were often hidden away or kept in the country. Today, people are becoming more familiar with their presence. Even so, the reality is that despite the improving attitudes, wheelchair accessibility throughout China is still a severe barrier to achieving independence for the disabled, along with the dignity it supplies.

In hosting the games China did a wonderful job of providing a barrier-free environment for the competitors. But in the wider community there is still much to be done.

One of CCSM's partner organisations has quietly been working to change attitudes and the environment for those in their care for decades now. They know that a simple outing to a museum or park for

disabled students can be a major exercise requiring many volunteers. It can take five volunteers to carry just one person and their wheelchair up or down stairs. The group are currently active in the movement to promote wheelchair accessibility in businesses and in the community at large.

There is a proverb, of unknown origin, that says, "kindnesses, like grain, increase by sowing". CCSM has long been sowing kindnesses! Our partner organisation wants those in their care to know their true value. It works with them to overcome any bitterness from rejection and discrimination. Physically and mentally, the volunteers and staff have helped them achieve more than they ever thought they would. And spiritually, when one cannot shout God's Word from the rooftops, there is always the unspoken statement of the Father's love.

If going the distance wins a gold medal, our Mercy co-workers would be on the winning team! Through long-term, faithful commitment, young lives have been dramatically changed, and now those people are contributing to change in the next generation.

But the seeds of kindness originated from further back, even beyond the intrepid missionaries who built China's first hospitals and infirmaries and orphanages. Ultimately, we trace our seed to Christ who put it so simply, "Love your neighbour as yourself".

So, what word do Chinese use today to describe the disabled? The official term is *canji ren*, literally “disabled sick

people.” However, the word “sick” is generally removed when providing an English translation.



What is possibly the single most important invention known to mankind? I would venture to say the printing press. With it came the ability to share ideas quickly, widely and accurately. It immediately boosted literacy and the spread of knowledge.

China is known to be the birthplace of the printing press and the first recorded mention was an imperial decree from 593

AD, in which the Sui Emperor Wen-ti ordered Buddhist images and scriptures to be printed. During the Tang Dynasty (618-906 AD) Chinese discovered how to print on paper using blocks of wood and other materials.

Bi Sheng (毕昇) (990–1051) developed the first known movable-type system for printing in China around 1040 AD during the Northern Song dynasty, using

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ceramic materials.

It was only after another 600 years, in 1455 AD, that the Gutenberg Bible (also known as the 42-line Bible, the Mazarin Bible or the B42) marked the beginning of mass printing in Europe.

Mao Zedong was well aware of the power of the press. In the 1960's, He had more than a billion copies of his manifesto put into print to popularise his ideologies. It was known as the 'Little Red Book.'

Today, China is renowned for affordable, high quality colour printing, and most of the world's publishing houses use its cheap and efficient services. In fact, the great majority of Bible versions and editions are printed in China at its Amity press.

Yet, China's reputation is being placed under strain by its mounting censorship. To meet legal requirements, Chinese printers must place demands on foreign publishers to change content that does not meet the Chinese standards or narrative, despite the fact their material will be marketed and distributed outside of China.

In 2018, in a restructure of the ideological sector, the State Administration of Press and Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SAPPRFT) was abolished and its functions divided. The role of supervising and managing the printing industry, and the distribution of news to both print

and Internet publications, is now overseen by the National Press and Publications Administration (NPPA). The NPPA, in turn, is directly under by the Communist Party's Publicity Department, which was previously known as the Propaganda Department.

According to new public security laws, works that "endanger social morality or national cultural traditions" are banned as is media that "promote cults and feudal superstitions". The vaguery of the edicts give the censors great power and cause publishers much confusion in deciding what is and isn't allowed.

Foreign publishers are obliged to scrutinise their material before deciding whether to self-censor - or pay more for a printer elsewhere. It is well known among publishers that any references to Tiananmen Square, Taiwan, disputed borders, Falun Gong, Tibet, the Dalai Lama and more recently Hong Kong, would be rejected. However now, the list of sensitive topics, names and places has expanded. Topics around nudity, gender, politics, human rights and religion are all potential mine fields. The final straw for one New Zealand publisher was being asked to alter historical facts in favour of China.

Prof Anne-Marie Brady, University of Canterbury raised the point, "There may be pressure on our universities to stop doing their printing in China, as it has a reputational risk."

Within China, books are disappearing. A rural middle school teacher told Reuters their school library had removed traditional comic-like picture books called lianhuanhua, books about Christianity, books about Buddhism

and copies of Animal Farm and 1984 (the classic novels by George Orwell). Public libraries and schools have been told to remove books by pro-democracy activists.



The Faithful Workers Who Never Give Up - Part 1.

It has been a blessing for CCSM to work with and encourage many Chinese co-workers over the years inside China. None more so than an amazing couple in a northern city who run a “language school”, John and Iris. Not their real names of course.

The couple received a vision in 2001 to build a language school and have devoted their life to fulfill it. The initial focus was on teaching international missionaries both Chinese language and Chinese culture. They believed that an understanding of the culture as well as language was a key to reaching Chinese for Christ.

Many CCSM School of Mission students

studied with John and Iris and their growing staff. Over the years its focus has expanded to include lessons to local children (with a strong Christian ethical curriculum) and then cross-cultural mission training to adults. Chinese Christians are taught how to teach Chinese. They are given cross cultural training and commercial skills. They then establish themselves in other Asian countries where they open Chinese language schools. These schools are in demand as many want to learn Chinese because of their trade with China. It becomes their base for reaching out to their new community sharing the Gospel of hope.

John is not only heavily involved in the school but holds other positions

as well. He is involved in many on-line and offline faith-related activities, pastors a church, serves as a board member of a Chinese seminary and a Chinese sending agency. All of this makes him a target!

When the writer first met John and Iris many years back, great care was taken to connect in secure locations with our phones turned off and left outside in a box. If we were going as a group, we travelled on different routes. Surveillance



has increased tenfold since then so these measures would now be a laughable exercise in futility!

In those shady locations, always alert, their request was always first and foremost for prayer. Prayer for wisdom, for safety, for a clear picture of the way ahead.

The road they have walked has been a rocky one.

Finance, regular on-going requirement for government approval, staffing and having adequate student numbers all have been a constant challenge.

They also faced personal tragedy in their life which remarkably became a widely shared testimony to the unsaved, especially amongst hospital staff around their home city. “Iris” fought a ferocious battle to give birth to their second child identified by scan as having a short life expectancy – maybe as little as a few hours. She was cruelly rejected by countless hospitals who insisted she must abort. Defective babies in China are almost always aborted.

In the end, when hope was nearly extinguished, a hospital did accept her. She was put in a room beside the busy abortion clinic. Their baby lived for many months – much loved and cherished. Doctors were challenged by this determined lady who never hesitated to tell them the reason why the child must be born.

Its life was not in their hands or her hands but Gods.

Operating a business in the Chinese environment mostly requires paying off officials but John and Iris insist on running their organisation along uncompromising Christian lines. No one was ever paid to approve their work or renew a license. Miraculously there was never any problem and they always received high commendation for their school. They have no doubt that God was in control and to Him belongs the Glory. They strongly believed in answered prayer and could never get enough of it.

PRAYER POINTERS

APRIL 2022

Statement of Father's Love

Pray that the good seed will continue to multiply in China.

- Pray for our co-workers in China, in the field of Mercy ministries. Pray that all their needs are met, and that they may continue to find favour with the authorities and organisations they work with.

Pray for the seed to take root and grow in the hearts of the disabled students and the volunteers, so that it may be multiplied.

Printers Shift

Give thanks for the high standard of work provided by China in publishing Bibles for the world.

Pray that His Word will continue to be faithfully reproduced and made available to all nations.

Pray that believers will continue to get behind new translations of the Word. There are many people groups still without a Bible in their language, both inside and out of China.

The Faithful Workers Who Never Give Up - Part 1.

Thank God for this couple and pray Christ's purposes will be worked out through them.

Pray that they will be encouraged in the Lord.

Pray for more "encouragers" to come alongside John and Iris (and others like them).

Pray that the Lord will provide Wisdom and answers for the way ahead.

Pray for safety and favour with neighbours, associates and authorities.

Pray for salvation and growth in the lives of those touched by the ministry of John and Iris.

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



PRAYER POINTERS

The Faithful Workers Who Never Give Up - Part 2.

Pray for the success of this cross-cultural ministry – that many who come to study Chinese will come to know Jesus as Saviour.

Pray for “John” and “Iris” as they continue to battle on in a hostile environment. Prayer for health, wisdom, safety and more innovative programmes as the Holy Spirit leads.

Pray for those who have been challenged by the life they lead and example they set – that fruit will result.

Hui Bible

Praise God for the new translation. May the Lord grant the Bible translators the wisdom and ability to complete this translation ministry as soon as possible.

Pray for Hui believers and Hui people who have been in touch with the gospel.

Ask the Heavenly Father to help Hui believers hold firm to their faith under persecution.

Pray that whole families might come to salvation.



Chinese Church Support Ministries

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



The Faithful Workers Who Never Give Up - Part 2.

Continuing the story of John and Iris, an amazing couple in a northern city who run a “language school”. (Pseudonyms have been used.)

The two years during the pandemic have been very challenging to the school and the ministry. In 2020 when Covid 19 started, they lost all on site students and moved to online teaching. Continuing the theme of setbacks and blessing that has been their life for 20 years, they lost their campus and had major legal issues with their landlord which seemed to leave them no option other than bankruptcy. Then a miracle!! Again, God provided! An overseas supporter was introduced to them by a local expatriot who was willing to finance and support the

school. As John said: “Not a day early, not a day late - right on the due date.”

John says of the schools future:

“We have resumed training Chinese missionaries online to become teachers and are building a teaching platform to help them build their Chinese schools in the mission field. This teaching platform will provide on-going support for these missionaries to set up their own schools. We believe it will have a big impact upon Chinese mission work.

There are still a lot of challenges ahead, so please pray for us. New online religious policy from March 1 will pose a threat to Chinese churches and to

us. In order to help future missionaries build schools in other countries, I'm also developing my network with international church leaders and organisations. Since both on site and online religious

from his residential compound to help the city with their Covid 19 control. This lasted for nearly a month and was very effective. Their own residential compound had no positive cases and their story was on the provincial tv news. When asked by residents why they did this they told them they were Christians who were called to love one another. They were (incredibly) able to share their faith with their "neighbours".

activities will be illegal according to law, please pray for us so that we can have wisdom to handle the situation and also pray for his protection over our ministry."

For those who know them this is typical of their determination to showcase Christianity whether through their school or how they live their life. From their absolute determination not to abort their baby who had no expectation of surviving, to providing community leadership, this couple battles on. There are no more worthier recipients of your prayers.

A recent covid lockdown in their hometown provided another opportunity to demonstrate their faith in action.

With the city in a total brutal lockdown, "John" organised over 100 volunteers

sect of Islam.

Although they speak Mandarin, the group has numerous Persian, Turkic, and Arabic additions to their vocabulary. They mainly use the Arabic and "Xiao'erjing" scripts in their religious life, for internal communication and in their Halal restaurants.

Hui Bible

China's third largest minority group in China, the Hui, is about to finally have their own translation of the Bible.

Hui are a unique group, primarily distinguished by their Muslim religion. In fact, the Chinese government counts all Chinese Muslims not included in the other official ethnic groups, as Hui nationality. Most follow the Sunni



Ancient Hui mosque in Linxia Old City showing Chinese architecture

Simply put, Xiao'erjing is a way to write Mandarin Chinese with Perso-Arabic script.

同相	柱	領首	富	乎合
صاحب	عماد	بشير	عبد	كاتب
تشانو	جو	شول	مو	خند

The oldest known example of writing in Xiao'erjing dates from about 1339 and was found on a stele in Xi'an, in Shaanxi province. Xiao'erjing (小儿锦) literally means “children’s script” or “minor script”. In the northwest of China, the Dongxiang and Salar minority groups also use Xiao'erjing. It was also used by speakers of Dungan, a related variety of Chinese spoken in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, but which

is now written with the Cyrillic alphabet.

In recent years, the use of Xiao'erjing has been under attack as part of the government’s policy of ‘sinicization’.

The Hui have a unique culture stemming from their religious belief and inherited from their ancestors. During the mid 7th century Arab and Persian traders came to China bringing the relatively new Muslim faith with them. And later in the 13th century another wave of Muslim settlers arrived. They were sent by Mongol conquerors to various locations in China to settle but were required to remain combat ready should the need arise to call upon them.

These civilian soldiers became farmers, scholars, artisans, religious



leaders, and officials. They married and scattered throughout China. This heritage is revealed in Hui today by their high cheekbones and round eyes. They are also well known for their sharp business skills.

Despite Mandarin Chinese being their first language, their unique culture commands the need for a translation sensitive to Hui understanding. For

example, the word Shangdi, the Chinese Christian name for God, is seen by them as being less than adequate to describe God's glory and greatness.



Muslims also consider it correct to read their religious text in Arabic, the original language of the Koran.

Recently it has been reported that a group of believers with a sense of commitment to the Hui people, have completed the translation of the first Bible in "Xiao'erjing".

The translation will be released as soon as it has completed the final stages of checking and proofreading. A trial version has apparently been launched in some mobile Bible Apps.

Most of the 13.9 million Hui would never have heard the gospel and there are very few fellowships among them. More about the Hui people can be found at the website pray4hui.com



CCSM UK

PO Box 5857
Sheffield, S10 9GG
T: 0114 229 5796

National Director: Martyn Wells
uk@ccsmglobal.org
ccsmglobal.org

