



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

CHINA PRAYER LETTER



AUGUST 2022

Scattered But Not Distracted

“Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.”
Acts 8:4 NIV

Whilst CCSM’s focus is on China mission, we keep in contact with other mission organisations who have a world-wide reach. In response to continuing demand for workers to the mission fields, one recently wrote:

“The troubling part is that Post-Covid lockdown we are the slowest we have ever been with enquiries.”

Another large organization wrote:

“.. we are seeing a decrease in donations and are mindful of financial pressures for most people. We still



In this issue

Scattered But Not
Distracted

The “Wanderers” of Chengdu

The Seeds of Life

Pre-approval of Comments

Is it Good Bye Hukou?

News from CCSM UK

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

have great needs for funds to cover all expected expenses in the next few months.”

Mission organizations live in the real world where the focus of many supporters right now is on survival - dealing with inflation, loss of savings, and the crippling cost of living. Inevitably this impacts the mission world in both income and recruitment.

Assignments are becoming more challenging as millions of Christians live in a world of increasing hostility and persecution. Risk assessment is not carried out in fear, but in awareness of needing good judgement and Godly wisdom.

And in many of our home countries we live in an environment of secular humanism and early stage persecution which will eventually impact all Christian work including mission.

Our own CCSM workers in China are isolated and restricted as Covid elimination strategies often finds them in long testing lines or locked down at home. Their opportunities to share Jesus are more and more limited.

Others have never made it back to China to resume their work. They are literally

“scattered” and seeking God for a vision of the way forward.

So it is encouraging to see how many are embracing innovative ways to “preach the word wherever they are”. One colleague is in a South-East Asian country as a dorm mother to large groups of Chinese students who study there. She says that this is providing more opportunity than she had while a teacher in China!

Another worker teaches English on-line back into Mainland China where she spent many years. Some supporters of CCSM Australia have a Zoom church with an international congregation including many in China. Other National Offices work extensively with local Chinese churches, preaching, leading youth groups and providing bulk quantities of Chinese language tracts. Some of our CCSM leadership are considering teams into “open” nations with large Chinese populations.

And we are always seeking God’s leading with an open mind and believing that God will make a way.

So though we have been scattered and restricted we continue to find ways to bless the church in China and in the diaspora.





The “Wanderers” of Chengdu

Chengdu, the provincial capital of Sichuan, is one of the five largest cities with the most populous urban development after Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. It has a history that traces back to 2400 years ago when the first emperor of the Shu Kingdom built its capital there. Retaining its original name “Shu” till today, it has long been an important political, commercial and economic hub of Sichuan. Furthermore, it is the first capital in Asia to be awarded the title of “Gourmet Food Capital” by UNESCO, thus carrying on the reputation of “Land of Abundance”. Rich history, strategic

location and liberal traditions are its advantages in economic development. Consequently, Chengdu people have cultivated a hedonic culture that values quality of life since ancient times. There is a saying that goes “Shu people love entertainment”. Today, Chinese netizens calls Chengdu the “gay capital”.

In Chengdu, gay men are nicknamed “piao piao” (“wanderer”). Chengdu East Street, which intersects with the well-known scenic spot Jiuyan Bridge, is nicknamed “Piao Piao Street” (also known as Bar Street) because of its many gay bars. Chunxi Road, Chengdu’s most

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prosperous commercial area that attracts avant-garde young people with its many branded goods stores and high-end art and cultural activities, is also hallowed by the “piao piao”.

Some scholars conducted a survey on college students in Chengdu and found that 70% of them approve of homosexual relationships (Liang Bin, 2012). Compared with a similar survey done nationwide (Hu Zhen, 2010) that yielded a result of about 50%, there is a big disparity. Another scholar, Wei

Wei, tried to summarize the causes. He believes that due to the diversity of Chengdu’s history, its civic culture is very tolerant of diverse ideas. Vibrant commercial development, natural resources and the catalysis of Taoism further magnify such liberal moral values. The term “piao piao” is indeed a vivid portrayal of the people who linger at and wander around places of entertainment.

The Seeds of Life



A team of researchers at Tsinghua University in China, working on mice, have established a system that can induce totipotent stem cells. These very special information-packed cells are often called the ‘seeds of life’.

Totipotent (TotiSCs) cells have the potential to differentiate into either a foetus, a yolk sac or a placenta. You could say they are the complete ‘starter pack’ for a baby.

early stages of reproduction. In fact, in mice, only the zygote (the very first, single cell resulting from the merging of a sperm and egg) and the blastomers (the 2-cell embryos from the first cleavage of the zygote) are totipotent cells. Subsequent stem cell divisions will be more specialised.

Pluripotent stem cells fall into this category. Though they are not quite the complete ‘starter pack’ these miraculous tiny bundles of information, when triggered, can differentiate into any of the 220 cell-types making up the body’s diverse tissues. Pluripotent cells can self-renew and are used in creating cell lines.

They are usually harvested (a byproduct of in vitro fertilization) at the 4 or 5th

They are only present in the very

day after conception.

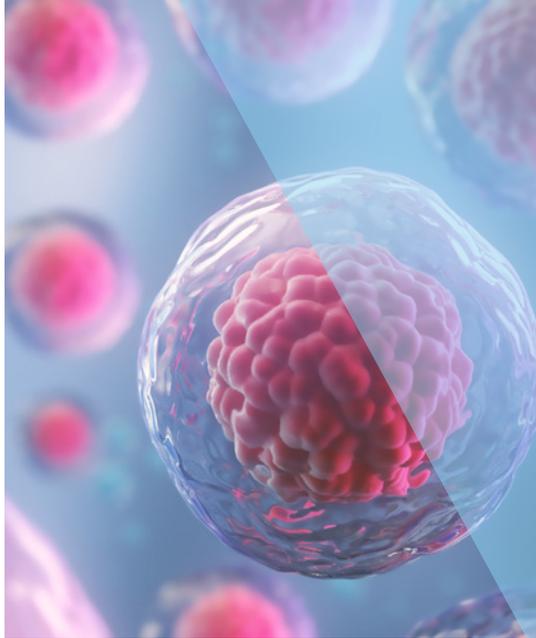
Stem cell research is a relatively recent development, but it is growing fast and exponentially. It has generated great excitement due to its potential to be used in tissue regeneration and cell replacement therapies. It offers great hope to people suffering from everything from heart disease to brain injuries.

However there is still much to learn before such therapies are safely applied in human applications.

It was only in 1998 that human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) were first able to be grown in the laboratory. In 2006, researchers identified conditions that would allow some mature human adult cells to be ‘reprogrammed’ into an embryonic stem cell-like state. Those reprogrammed stem cells are called induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs).

The Chinese team, led by Sheng Ding, have now discovered a system that uses three tiny molecules to ‘coax’ mouse pluripotent stem cells into cells exhibiting totipotent characteristics. In other words, they are returned to the state where they hold all the information required to potentially become a life on their own. This opens up the possibilities that life might be established in vitro (outside the body) in the absence of germline (sperm and egg) cells.

If the work is taken further and fully realised it would allow individuals who



cannot have a child to have children. It could also be a tool for reestablishing endangered species. [An article*](#) published by Tsinghua University says, this innovation “will have a wide range of implications, such as earning a second chance at the creation of individual life and even accelerating the evolution of a species.”

Interestingly, in various other parts of the world, research is advancing quite successfully in developing an artificial uterus, and the concept appears to be extremely close to moving from the realms of scifi into reality.

It is mind blowing when you begin to consider the ramifications of these two innovations - to human lifestyles, to families, in bio warfare, baby factories and reproductive monetization... and even to how animals are farmed.



Pre-approval of Comments

It's known by China's netizens and the censorship industry that replies to comments made under articles, and bullet chats in videos, are less strictly moderated. Opinions can be "adjusted" after censors have looked over and approved the content. But this last remaining, tiny loophole available to free expression is about to be plugged.

On June 17, 2022, a draft update was released which is aimed at addressing the Responsibilities of Platforms and Content Creators in Managing Online Comments. It will require that all comments made on websites, apps and online platforms be approved prior to publishing.

To universally review every comment pre-publishing would incur astronomical costs to social media platforms. And would very likely result in the option to comment being completely withdrawn from many article and video platforms.

At the moment, Weibo, a Twitter-like platform, currently only monitors posts discussing sensitive topics, or comments by accounts after they

have previously violated censorship rules.

ByteDance, the company behind social media apps like TikTok, Douyin, and the AI-powered news aggregator Toutiao, employs a small army of staff to review content. It's said to have thousands of censors on its books. Other platforms engage censorship-for-hire companies to do the work for them. They are all aware of the fines that will be inflicted if illegal content is missed.

If passed into law, the updates will also require the content creators themselves (referred to as "public account operators") to take responsibility for identifying illegal or "negative" comments connected to their posts and reporting it.

This latest update will be another tool used to police rules made earlier this year that outlawed religious conversations from public online platforms.

As is rather typical in Chinese law, the new regulations are slightly vague, leaving the public speculating how strictly the rules will be enforced.

PRAYER POINTERS

AUGUST 2022

Scattered But Not Distracted

Pray that CCSM and other mission organisations will continue to receive support and encouragement.

Pray for those who though scattered continue to find ways to “preach the word”.

Pray for an end to this difficult season in China that those who were led there may once again thrive there.

The “Wanderers” of Chengdu

Pray that Christians will respond in love and wisdom to people in the gay community.

Pray that the Chinese church will have compassion and minister to the gay community.

Pray for the Good News of the love of God to reach people in all walks of life in China.

The Seeds of Life

Praise God as we are fearfully and wonderfully made! [Psalm 139:13-16]

Pray that God will raise up leadership and law makers in China with righteous and ethical character to navigate the minefields ahead in reproductive law.

Pray for the protection of China’s next generation of children.



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

PRAYER POINTERS

Pre-approval of Comments

Thank you Lord that 2000 years ago you gave up your rights for us. You spoke only what you heard your Father in Heaven speak. You left your heavenly position to become a carpenter under Roman rule. You gave up your right to life that we might live. Thank you Lord that through your work on the cross we have gained true freedom and none can take it from us.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide Chinese Christians to those who are ready to hear the Good News of the Kingdom.

Pray that Chinese Christians will grow as disciple makers.

Is it Good Bye Hukou?

Pray for wisdom for local governments who must make decisions affecting families and lives.

Pray that left behind children and elderly will soon become a thing of the past.

Pray for the Christian organisations that work among the left behind children and elderly.

News From CCSM UK

Pray the church leaders will receive wisdom to know how best to lead their congregations.

Pray that Chinese Christians will know with certainty that God will remain faithful and they can put their whole trust in him.

Pray that freedom will remain in China to meet and share the Gospel.

Pray for a sense of peace from God for Christians in China that will also demonstrate God's love to others.



Chinese Church Support Ministries

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

Is it Good Bye Hukou?

A longheld complaint among Chinese migrant workers is that the threshold to qualify for urban hukou is unachievable. In the megacities, it requires the ability to purchase a house, something attainable only by the super rich or highly qualified.

Hukou is the household registration that determines where your children can be educated, what property you can buy, the loans you can apply for, and the social services, benefits and healthcare to which you are entitled. People born in the rural backwaters may move to a wealthy city, but with their rural hukou they are denied the privileges their urban-born neighbour would receive.

The system has served the purpose of keeping farmers on their farms, monitoring the populace, and preventing a rapid population shift from swamping the industrialising cities, as China's economy modernised.

For years now, third and fourth tier cities have been taking steps to ease their hukou policies. And in March, China's National Development and Reform Commission published a policy document calling on cities with populations under 3 million to comprehensively abolish all hukou



restrictions this year.

China's prosperous megacities fear hukou reform would usher in a flood of migrant families, overwhelming facilities and leading to slum zones and social disorder. But in the first half of 2022, while under the Covid-zero policy, even major cities and provinces have softened hukou requirements.

Zhejiang province relaxed criteria for recent graduates. Jiangxi and Shandong provinces and Yichang city have made reforms. In February Hainan Island unified urban and rural hukou. Dalian city, Xiamen and even Beijing cities have eased restrictions, with Beijing



dropping hukou restrictions in schools in April. And all postgraduate students from Shanghai, who have full-time employment contracts from qualified employers, are now offered a Shanghai hukou. Previously only those who had attained a master's degree from an elite university could apply.

What has motivated these changes to the controversial policy?

The answer could be tied to China's stagnated economy, the population aging crisis and subsequent shrinking labour supply. To explain further, understand that since achieving the goal of a "moderately prosperous China", the nation has been working toward the next stage, the Common Prosperity Agenda. China in the past few decades, has permitted some regions of the country to race ahead economically to help the nation, as a whole, claw its way out of crippling poverty. Now the aim is to narrow the gap between

the urban rich and the rural poor, the affluent eastern border and the inland hinterlands.

Xi Jinping is encouraging the country to get behind the policy of "Internal Circulation", creating a more self-sufficient China. It involves growing both domestic demand and consumption.

However with a slumping economy, uncertainty and a population crisis (fewer people caring for more elderly) people are tending to save and not spend.

Removing hukou restrictions would allow more migrants to bring their families to be with them. Aged parents would have care. Migrants would not need to save and send money to left behind parents and children. Long distance travel for family visits, or to access local government services would be unnecessary and commutes would be slashed.

At the same time, freeing up disposable income for internal tourism, which the government is heavily promoting. Even the real estate debt crisis might be relieved.

China has around 290 million migrant workers, those residing outside their place of hukou registration, roughly one third of the total workforce. Experts have estimated that dropping hukou and allowing them to move freely, could translate to returning up to one trillion

yuan back into circulation!

How far China will actually go in abolishing hukou is in the hands of each local government. There could well be resistance when they consider the bill for migrant's social security, at a time when officials are under pressure to maintain social and economic stability.

The migrant's hope of meaningful and radical reform may be dimmed to just more incremental reform.



News from CCSM UK

Certainty – everyone seems to want it. In a world where there is so much uncertainty and confusion, it feels like people will grasp onto whatever promises certainty. People want to know what will happen next, when will inflation come down, when will energy prices go back to manageable levels. What will happen next in Ukraine? Can I travel by air without disruption? When will China allow visitors into the country? How will climate change make an impact on me? Probably some of the high rates of anxiety and mental health issues stem from uncertainty about local concerns and also global uncertainty.

But – we do have certainty in our faith, in our knowledge that God is faithful and all-powerful. He knows with certainty what is going to happen and when. So we can receive certainty through faith.

Our Christian life is a walk of faith. As the verses from Romans below demonstrate, there are things we can be certain about, even if doubts slip in from time to time. We confess that God is faithful and that we are adopted into his family.

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have



been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.” [Romans 6: 4-6 NIV]

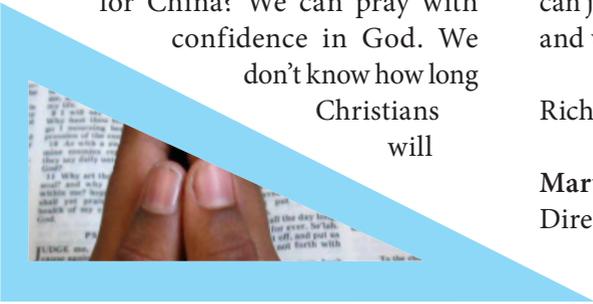
How does this affect how we pray for China? We can pray with confidence in God. We don't know how long

Christians will

face persecution and opposition but we know God will keep them, and enable them to remain faithful to him. We know that for many church leaders their prayers are for wisdom in leading their congregations and how to care for them, rather than prayers that the government will change. They are looking to see God's will being done in all circumstances. We can join with them in praying for blessing and wisdom for faithful living.

Richest Blessings,

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