

# July

## Family、Nation、World

*Prayer Monthly - Jul 2018*



Become a True Disciple, For the Glory of God

Become a True Church, Establish True Mission

Just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do. (1 Peter 1:15)



基督教柏斯宣道會  
Perth Alliance Church

English

# Prayer letter monthly

Meditation verse : Jeremiah 29 : 11 - 13

1/7	S U N	Pray for the pastoral retreat which is on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup> July. Pray that all pastors might be rested and refreshed, and that they may have quality time for fellowship during this retreat. (Pastoral retreat)
2/7	M O N	The North Mandarin congregation has finished their discipleship training course. Give thanks that the 7 participants persevered through to the end. Ask God to continue guiding their path. (N.Mand DT)
3/7	T U E	Please pray for the devotion trip to Cairns between 09/07 to 15/07 by the South Mandarin discipleship training group. Ask the holy spirit to guide Ps. Victor and his wife's leadership and teaching. Please pray for the participants, that they will learn the truth and experience grace. (S.Mand DT)
4/7	W E D	There will be an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) to elect a nomination committee for the board of deacons, please pray for suitable candidates (EGM)
5/7	T H U	Give thanks that Ps Thomas's health has improved after he completed the last course of chemotherapy. Please continue to pray for the last course of treatment, that God will reduce the side effects and stop the cancer cells from spreading or mutating, bringing it under control. (Ps. Thomas)
6/7	F R I	Thank God for sustaining all the students through their exams in June. Pray that they will use their time wisely during the school holidays and midyear break, that this may be a time to develop a regular habit of prayer and meditation in God's Word, and spend time with friends and family. (Students on holiday)
7/7	S A T	Ask God to help the brothers and sisters of the North Mandarin congregation, that they will grow spiritually, seek growth and that they will have Christ as centre in their lives, to draw other people close to Jesus. (N.Mand members Spiritual growth)
8/7	S U N	Ask God to give strength to the teams serving in the fellowship groups of the South Cantonese congregation. Pray that their work, family and physical health can be blessed, to lead brothers and sisters to serve the Lord together. (S.Cant Small Groups)
9/7	M O N	Give thanks for the positive results of the EGM, that we were able to agree to place an offer for 39 Keane St. Pray that the team of elders will work together in unity and pray for God's clear guidance and wisdom in this process. (South property purchase)
10/7	T U E	In July Jane, Janet, Martin, Jocelyn, Alice and some sisters from the South Cantonese working young adults group are attending the working young adults retreat held by Dr. Cui in Sydney. Ask God to keep them safe, and bless them with a good time of learning. Pray that they will be able to apply what they learnt when they return to Perth. (Working young adult retreat)
11/7	W E D	Please pray for brother Shen Jian whom is suffering from Prostate cancer and Thyroid cancer (lymphoma). Pray that God can guide the doctors and the team with an accurate diagnosis, and that they will plan an appropriate treatment. (Member's health)

12/7	T H U	Please pray for the North English Church Plant (NECP): ask God to give us clear vision, a heart of love, and humbleness to listen to the calling of God so that we can build His church with faith and boldness. Also pray that God will call up brothers and sisters who are burdened with this ministry and who are willing to commit to this long term project. Pray that God will keep leading us in future planning in this ministry. (NECP)
13/7	F R I	Pray for the PACE leaders retreat on the 21 <sup>st</sup> July. Pray for spiritual refreshment and renewal for the leaders, as well as a fruitful fellowship time together. (S.Eng Leader's retreat)
14/7	S A T	The South Mandarin mission committee just had an evaluation of each cell group, give thanks that we have been reminded to reflect on whether or not the group or individuals are experiencing changes to their lives. May this reminder help us to remember to focus on spiritual growth. (S.Mand evaluation)
15/7	S U N	Ask God to bless the families of the North Mandarin congregation, that parents will have good relationships with their children and that everyone is able to be more Christ-like in their life, to become a good testimony and bring glory to the name of God. (N.Mand Families)
16/7	M O N	In April, South Cantonese started a new family cell group plan. That each brother and sister is assigned to a cell group, and each group consists of brothers and sisters of different ages. There are 3 scheduled meetings, the second one will be in July. Ask God to guide the organisers to plan the meetings with wisdom. Pray that this will further the fellowship between members of different age groups, that members will be encouraged to care for each other. (S.Cant Family cell)
17/7	T U E	Ask God to revive the servant heart of members in the South Mandarin congregation, that they will be willing to serve in ministry. Pray also that they would long to share the gospel with friends and family, and that they will care for and visit those in need. (S.Mand serving and sharing the Gospel)
18/7	W E D	Please give thanks for the leaders of UF, Young Adult Group and the singspiration leaders. They faithfully dedicate their time, heart and prayers to build up a group of high school and university students who can be the light and salt to their peers. Pray and ask God to give these leaders extra grace, strength and wisdom to care for the students. (North UF Leaders)
19/7	T H U	Pray for love and perseverance in the emerging and existing discipling relationships in PACE. Ask God to continue to grow a culture of discipleship in PACE; may the leaders and members of PACE catch the same vision from God. (S.Eng DT)
20/7	F R I	Please pray for the North Mandarin mission committee, that God will bless them with heavenly wisdom, so they could serve and collaborate well in unity. (N.Mand MC)
21/7	S A T	Ask God to strengthen Ps. Kevin, Catherine and Philip, that their work and family life, physically and spiritually can be full of grace, that they will be able to lead brothers and sisters effectively. (S.Cant Leaders)

22/7	S U N	Please pray for the office staff, ask God to bless them with wisdom, so that they can prioritise work and have better communication with the pastors. Pray that they may be quick to adapt to change in ministry and that they would be able to be flexible to deal with late notices and other issues which may arise. <span style="color: red;">(Office staff)</span>
23/7	M O N	Pray for our new friends and ask God to help them to find their belonging in church life. Pray that they may enjoy attending church events, so they might get to know Christ as their personal saviour! <span style="color: red;">(New friends)</span>
24/7	T U E	Please pray for the short term mission trips in our church this year, we have east Malaysia, south Thailand, China and beach mission. Please pray for the brothers and sisters who have signed up and for those who are thinking of participating, that they will have a vision from God and take a step of faith. <span style="color: red;">(STMs)</span>
25/7	W E D	Pray that God will give PACE people a burdened heart for the lost around them, and give us the courage and love to reach out to non-Christians we come into contact with. <span style="color: red;">(S. Eng sharing the gospel)</span>
26/7	T H U	Pray for the partners of our members who are not yet Christians, ask God to use the brothers or sisters of our church to be a wonderful witness of God, that they would be drawn to Lord Jesus to believe in Him and be saved. <span style="color: red;">(North unbelieving partners)</span>
27/7	F R I	Please pray for the mentoring program for studying young adults, there are 6 of them being mentored at the moment. Ask God to use this one on one care and training program for studying young adults so that they are able to seek and serve God together. <span style="color: red;">(S.Cant Mentor training)</span>
28/7	S A T	Please pray for the South Mandarin family camp on 24/12-26/12. It will also be an English youth camp. Please pray for the planning and organizing committee and for the brothers and sisters who plan to attend. <span style="color: red;">(S.Mand Camp)</span>
29/7	S U N	North Mandarin is planning a camp for March next year, ask God to lead us in preparing for all we need. <span style="color: red;">(N.Mand Camp next year)</span>
30/7	M O N	Pray for the university students who are attending MYC (Mid year conference) this July. May they grow in their love and knowledge of Jesus as they immerse themselves in the Word of God for the 5 days at the conference. <span style="color: red;">(MYC)</span>
31/7	T U E	South Cantonese is planning on a short term mission trip (STM) in December to the Interior Division of Sabah Malaysia. A total of 15 brothers and sisters will be going. Pray that God will equip them in the next 7 training sessions, help the team to get to know each other and that they may experience God during the STM. <span style="color: red;">(S.Cant STM)</span>

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Prayer Letter  
OMF International

*July / August 2018*

# M ISSIONS IN CHINA'S SOUTHWEST AND C HINA'S CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS C HALLENGE

Dating from the time that Morrison began his work, Protestantism has been in China just over 200 years. However, counting from the time that John McCarthy of the CIM set out from Shanghai for Yunnan in 1877<sup>1</sup>, Protestantism in China's Southwest has had only slightly more than a century of missions history. For most Han Chinese, China's Southwest is a distant place, the habitation of many minority ethnic groups. In recent history, Yunnan was where the Qing Dynasty banished its most hardened criminals. Had it not been for the Sino-Japanese war which forced the Nationalists to set up their

temporary capital in Chongqing, most Han would never have considered developing this region. Notwithstanding, from soon after the founding of the CIM, Western missionaries had the Southwest in view. And, notably, based on the number of different ethnic groups, and after half a century of hard effort until Western missionaries were expelled in 1950, the Southwest had the highest number of Christians per capita in all of China.

From the standpoint of missional resources, the Southwest was also a "minority" place. Whether

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1. John McCarthy, "The Province of Yunnan", Marshall Broomhall, ed. *The Chinese Empire: A General Missionary Survey*, London: Morgan & Scott and China Inland Mission, 1907.

establishing schools or hospitals, or even in the placing of missionary personnel, the Southwest was low on the list of priorities for most mission societies, with the exception of the CIM and the Christian and Missionary Alliance (in Guangxi). This ranking is to be viewed in light of the fact that the Southwest occupies a quarter of modern China's land area. Of the 13 Christian universities established in China, only one, the West China Union University, was in the Southwest, and that in the Han center of Chengdu. However in discussing education here, we would be remiss if we fail to mention Samuel Pollard and the Guizhou Shimen Kan School that he founded primarily to serve the Miao peoples. Based on limited records surviving, we see over 4,000 primary school pupils and hundreds of high schoolers educated at Shimen Kan between 1905-1950.

Besides the scarcity of resources, the Southwest offered many other challenges. In Han areas, workers need only to learn Mandarin and Chinese culture. But in the case of missionaries like Pollard and James O. Fraser, they had to acquire a minority tongue after Chinese and then proceed to devise a script suitable for their people.

Han Chinese participation in missions in the Southwest begins with the formation of the China Inland Missionary Union, 1918, by evangelist Ding Limei and others.

During the Second World War the Chinese Christian Students' Union was set up to work mainly in the Southwest. The late writer and poet, Bian Yunbo, was one of their members. Compared to Western workers, however, the contributions of Chinese churches was clearly limited. Han Christians mostly planted churches in major urban centers among their own, and church plants among minority peoples were virtually unknown.

With the goal of missions being to let the unreached hear the Good News, accept Jesus as Savior and establish the Church, how is it in the resource-poor Southwest, lacking much involvement by Han churches, that the harvest of Western missionaries was more plentiful than that in Eastern and Central China? We can take the 1950's as the marker for the first phase of missions in the Southwest, from the expulsion of foreign missionaries and the forced return of Han evangelists to their home areas. Now, 70 years later, the Gospel is moving westward and cross-cultural missions is once again an important topic in the Chinese church. How will the second phase of Southwest missions proceed? What lessons can we learn from the past? Which strategies should we continue? These are questions we need to consider seriously and find answers to.

The Big Flowery Miao and the Lisu

*(Continued on page 6)*

## PRAYER POINTS

### July / August 2018

**1** Today is the 21st anniversary of the return of Hong Kong to China. Pray for positive development in the relationship between HK and China.

**2** A Gallup poll showed that, up through 2017, over 70% of the world's people are theists while 67% of China's people do not believe in any religion. Thus China again is established as the country with the most atheists and biggest proportion of non-believers in the world. Yet China's 55 ethnic minorities all have their own religions. Atheists are almost all Han. Pray for this unique social phenomenon and the church trying to grow within it.

**3** Reportedly, on June 1st the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) issued its "Notice of Administrative Measures for the Examination and Approval of Temporary Religious Places". As this Measure includes so-called "guidance for church affairs" and also includes many specific "bans", the already-restricted house churches are going to see further legal restrictions on their activities. Pray that the house churches will continue to look to Christ in the midst of these new circumstances.

**4** According to the 6th census conducted in China in 2010, there are 1.22 billion Han Chinese (91.51%) and 110 million minorities (8.49%) in the 31 provinces, autonomous regions, centrally-administered municipalities (like Beijing and Shanghai), and

including those on active service with the armed forces. Please pray for the evangelization efforts among the non-Han people groups.

**5** Other than Hui and Manchu peoples who use Chinese, the other 53 minority groups all have their own languages and cultures. However, many of these languages have no written scripts. Please remember the many on-going Bible translation efforts for the minorities. Pray especially for the involvement of Chinese Christians and churches.

**6** The official way that ethnic groups are categorized leaves much to be desired, and there are many more "unrecognized people groups" than those included among the 55 officially recognized ethnicities. According to the current categorization, "China-born Jews" are counted as "Hui". However the Jews reject this classification and are therefore an "unrecognized people group". This in turn means they cannot enjoy some of the benefits granted to minorities under current official policy. Pray that the many "unrecognized ethnicities" may soon gain their rights.

**7** Among the "unrecognized people groups", there are about one million Lipo people living mainly in Yunnan. Many are Christians. Let's pray for the Lipo churches.

**8** "Old John" is an elderly Lipo who has dedicated his life to the translation of the Bible into Lipo. We praise God for his commitment and pray for a younger generation to pick up his baton.

**9** Please pray for Lisu evangelists in the Lisu churches. Most are quite elderly



but still need to lead the church to face the complicated challenges arising from societal change. May the Lord raise more young people to carry the heavy burden of pastoral responsibilities.

**10** Please pray for a Lisu evangelist named Li. Most of his church members are now working in the cities, so several years ago he also went to the city to set up a meeting point in order to pastor the flock there. At the same time he continues to care for those remaining in the villages, mostly elderly, but over the years he's finding it hard to do both. Pray that new workers may be raised up in the churches.

**11** Please pray for the Big Flowery Miao churches and workers in Guizhou. As the country now implements a policy of returning farmland to forest, many folk are forced into the cities to earn their livelihoods. This trend profoundly affects pastoral ministry. May the Lord grant strength to these Miao evangelists so that they can rise to today's challenges.

**12** Please pray for evangelist Ma who is a Miao, and his family. His wife has been bed-ridden for many years. May the Lord heal his wife and revive his church.

**13** Please pray for a kindergarten started by a Miao church. Although many pupils are enrolled, they do not have qualified teachers nor a curriculum adapted to their ethnicity. May the Lord raise up the right teachers who are willing to commit long term to serve in Miao villages.

**14** Please remember young White Miao evangelists raised up their churches in Yunnan. May the Lord grant them to experience His presence and mighty power in a complex environment and become mature workers able to shoulder responsibilities in this generation.

**15** Please pray for workers of the Xian people coming from the north to serve among the Zhuang in Guangxi. Pray for God's help in quickly adapting to the climate and culture in the south. Remember also their children as they adjust to new schools.

**16** Please pray for the Yi church and evangelists. Most of them are young with hearts to serve, but lack education. May the Lord grant them eagerness and a passion for study.

**17** Most village evangelists in China have to work to earn a living while doing pastoral work. A Miao evangelist was killed while working in a mine. Please pray for his wife who is still looked upon as "the pastor's wife". May the Lord comfort this sister and her child so that they can continue to trust in God during this difficult time.

**18** Please pray for urban Christians serving cross-culturally among the Shui people in Guizhou. May the Lord grant them wisdom, physical and spiritual strength to resist all attacks from the evil one.

**19** Please pray for Han Christians serving among the Buyi. Pray that they'll quickly adjust to the new environment and be able to work together with the local church in evangelism.



**20** Please pray for seminarians from the Qilao and Tujia peoples. May the Lord strengthen them to overcome cultural differences and study well. Pray that after graduation they'll return home to preach the Gospel and edify the church.

**21** Please pray for a historically unreached people, the Erlunchun located in Daxing-Anling, Manchuria. May God raise people to enter their midst to deliver them from the power of evil spirits and lead them to know Jesus's salvation.

**22** Please pray for another unreached group located in western Sichuan. The Qiang are one of the oldest ethnic groups in China. Although in recent years many Han Christians have encountered Qiang people in the course of evangelizing Tibetans, yet outreach work is still in its beginning stages. May the Lord raise up missionaries who will be trained and can understand Qiang culture.

**23** Please pray for some young Han Christians who did evangelism in an area where Tibetans and Qiang live side by side. They were treated brutally as they tried to share the good news and suffered much trauma. Even after several years' rest and recovery, some still cannot shake off the shadows of that violence. May the Lord continue to heal them.

**24** Please pray for ministry among the Naxi people. Although much resources and efforts have been poured in, fruit comes quite slowly. May the Lord lead people living in this strongly polytheistic environment to come to know the One True God.

**25** Please pray for the Jingpo people who have a high percentage of believers among them. They not only have their own churches but these have initiated and are involved in leprosy outreach. We give thanks for them and ask the Lord to continue to increase their strength and joy in serving.

**26** Pray for Christians among the ethnic minorities working the manufacturing zones of the Pearl and Yangtze Delta regions. May God move more local churches to welcome them so that in cross-cultural ministry they may all do the work of evangelists.

**27** Pray for cross-cultural expatriate workers and those ministering via NGO platforms in southwest China. May God watch over their spiritual and physical health and grant especially that those with families may see their children enjoy a happy school life.

**28** Please pray for overseas students learning minority languages and culture in universities in China's southwest. Many of them are young, single, with a zeal for evangelism. May God enable them to walk the path of long-term service in this region.

**29** Please pray for overseas Christians teaching English at various schools and colleges in the Southwest. Although they interact directly with students, tight restrictions make it difficult for them to testify freely to their faith. May the Lord grant them divine wisdom in sharing the good news with their students.

**30** Remember the many Jinpo, Miao and Zhuang Christians partnering with Han churches to preach the Gospel across the borders of Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. May they experience God's own works as they minister.

**31** Pray for the many Han as well as minority Christians who are persevering in ministry in the mountain areas. Pray they can enjoy some time of rest this summer.

*(Continued from page 2)*

are two groups with the highest proportion of Christians among them. Their acceptance of the Faith was based on two critical factors: (1) their historical and cultural roots had intersections with the Old Testament that provided bridges for the Gospel; (2) the incarnational approach of missionaries in their midst won their respect. In the 1990's when this writer first served in Lisu villages, he still heard many stories of J.O. Fraser from tribal elders, how the churches revered Fraser and how the people thirsted for the Gospel. (see pictures)

Cultural awareness, having the right motivation and heart attitude – these

are obviously critical success factors in missions. The relatively low percentage of Han professing Christ, even after 200+ years of mission effort, is due to the impregnable fortress created by the Confucian-Buddhist-Taoist traditions and deeply embedded Chinese culture. This fortress is also responsible for the limited involvement of Chinese in missions to minorities. Secure in their fortress, Chinese are unwilling to accept new things from outside and are reluctant to leave its cultural confines to walk a new road.

The last few decades shows up this situation even more clearly. Since



the 1950's, China has viewed itself as a nation composed of the Han plus 55 "minority" ethnicities. This concept is based on Stalin's idea in Marxism and the Question of Nationalities<sup>2</sup>. It takes no account of the more appropriate concept of "indigenous peoples". The impact of Stalin's theory in China at least was to negate the worth of ethnic culture and history. Due to their "minority" status, ethnic groups have long been marginalized and under-valued. For example, many people today are unaware that one of the founders of the Chinese nation and culture, the Great Yu, was ethnically Miao. Thus

Miao elements are woven into the foundations of Chinese culture.

And so in order truly to understand "China", we must not stubbornly cling to the habitual narrow view of "Han China". Rather, we must develop a balanced view based on original cultures and how they fused over history, thereby taking into account the contributions of minority groups. The way that minority groups are defined today is unhealthily Han-centric. So for example, emphasizing "minority policies" makes it easy for Han to develop a condescending attitude

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2. Specifically, according to Stalin's definition, the so-called "nations" are based on common language, common regions, common economic life, and common psychological qualities. These are four "common" conditions that constitute the "community".

toward other groups, to the detriment of equal treatment and mutual respect. If we are really to do missions, we need to set aside the “my group” mentality and become like Fraser and Pollard – heroes of incarnational ministry who respected the cultures of the people they lived amongst. This step of incarnational ministry is one of the hardest yet most necessary for missions today.

A second point following from the above, today’s policies emphasize Chinese language as the basis in education, even as Tibetans strive to hold on to the differences between their culture and China’s. This has resulted in the weakening of all ethnic Southwest cultures which are rooted in their own languages, and their indigenous scholars are fewer and fewer. Are Han Christians willing to go a step further, just as did their Western predecessors? This “step further” necessitates their studying and preserving original cultures and teaching the ethnic youth to understand and maintain their millennia-old traditions. It is even more important that Christians examine Chinese culture broadly from a Christian standpoint and discover the intrinsic convergence between all cultures and the Gospel, thus evading the Confucian-Buddhist-Taoist accretions. None of this will be easy, whether from the standpoint of anthropology or sociology. But it will hasten the Christianization of China.

Thirdly, carried along by contemporary society’s great wave of economic development, many mountain peoples also choose to migrate and find work in the cities. They turn their backs on their home villages to seek a better life in the urban centers. Their educational deficiencies and ethnic backgrounds make them uncompetitive. Thus though they’re living in the midst of Han people, the ethnic minority persons wall themselves off and become like social orphans. Unlike in the time of Fraser, Pollard and J. R. Adam, Han Christians today can find “minority peoples” right on their own doorsteps. This gives them a wonderful opportunity to practise crossing cultures, to build a beautiful group identity in Christ with someone from another ethnicity. Through these relationships, the Han can approach the mountain peoples. Clearly this is the way to go in the second phase of “Southwest missions.”