

May  
Family, Nation, World  
Prayer letter  
*PAC Prayer Monthly- May 2018*



Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.  
Hebrews 12:1



基督教柏斯宣道會  
Perth Alliance Church

Become a True Disciple, For the Glory of God

Become a True Church, Establish True Mission

English

# M o n t h l y P r a y e r L e t t e r

1 /5	T U E	Give thanks for the elders and deacons who decided to use some funds to renovate the English congregation's hall at 6/41. The renovation has now been completed and the English congregation will have an opportunity to grow and serve. Please pray for this. <span style="float: right;">(N41 Renovation completion)</span>
2 /5	W E D	In May, a representative from TEAR Australia will lead a small group of PACE members in doing a series of Bible Studies which will focus on reaching to the marginalized in our community. Pray that this 'missional group' will be transformed and challenged by God's Word, and be the pioneer group for connecting and reaching out to the Belmont community. Pray that God will guide us and provide opportunities for us to connect with those in Belmont. May this encourage more members and small groups to engage with our community. <span style="float: right;">(S.Eng outreach)</span>
3 /5	T H U	Please keep praying for Ps. Thomas as he continues with his chemotherapy treatment. The doctor has recommended that he should gain more weight so that his body will be able to cope with the challenges of his chemotherapy treatment. <span style="float: right;">(Ps. Thomas)</span>
4 /5	F R I	Please pray for the members of the north church as they have had some renovations completed in their meeting hall. There have been some readjustments and the children's Sunday school hall has been moved to allow the parents to worship without distraction. Pray and ask God to guide us in to whole hearted worship on Sundays when using this newly renovated place. <span style="float: right;">(N.Mand New venue)</span>
5 /5	S A T	The South cantonese congregation have started their family cell groups in April, most groups have had their first meeting. The groups are diverse with brothers and sisters of different age groups. Please pray for the congregation and the cell groups as they plan three combined cell group events this year, with the aim to better fellowship. <span style="float: right;">(S.Can CG)</span>
6 /5	S U N	Pray for those who are serving in leadership roles. Pray that they will have a desire for maturity in their faith, yearn for growth in godliness and lead by personal example. May they continue to be nourished by God's word and experience Him in their own daily life, before attempting to lead others to experience the same. <span style="float: right;">(S.Eng Leaders)</span>
7 /5	M O N	The north Mandarin congregation had an event on the 25/4. Give thanks to God for great weather, great meeting places and a great time together. Please continue to pray for the north Mandarin and opportunities to grow relationships and fellowships with one another <span style="float: right;">(N.Mand Grand tour)</span>
8 /5	T U E	Ps Thomas would like to give thanks for the service given by brothers and sisters. Please pray that these people will be blessed. <span style="float: right;">(Ps. Thomas)</span>
9 /5	W E D	There will be a workshop titled "How to deal with work pressure and sorrow" on the 19/05 and 26/05. Please pray and ask God to bless these workshops. Pray for a smooth running workshop and for the speaker Roger Tan, that he will deliver a message which will build up brothers and sisters. <span style="float: right;">(Talk)</span>
10 /5	T H U	Please pray for elderly member Wu Wen Yan as she recovers from hip replacement surgery. <span style="float: right;">(Member's rest)</span>

11 /5	F R I	Please continue to remember Ps. Thomas in your prayers. He is still keeping a joyful heart and is filled with faith by the guidance from God, trusting in God for healing. (Ps. Thomas)
12 /5	S A T	Please continue to pray for the north church as the renovations to the hall altered some of the original plans. Give thanks to God for the provision of a good place for worship. Ask God to keep guiding us in these matters. (N.Mand ministry after renovation)
13 /5	S U N	Ask God to prepare a core team of members who will be responsible for planting for the north English congregation. Pray for grace from God, wisdom and faithful members with boldness to plan for this ministry. Ask God to bring up the right people who are filled with the Holy Spirit to complete this task, with the purpose of serving and building up brothers and sisters (Core team for North English planting)
14 /5	M O N	Pray for Rolf and others who are joining the Soul Care Conference which is organized by the Alliance, in Sydney at the end of May. Pray that this will be a fruitful time for learning so that the attendees may be equipped for ministering to others in our church community. (S.Eng Soul care training)
15 /5	T U E	Give thanks for the bible study in the south Mandarin congregation on the book of Luke, which will conclude on the 16/05, ask God for guidance to practice what they have learnt, to live out the word of God. (practice in life)
16 /5	W E D	Please pray for those who are involved with the studying young adults mentoring program. Ask God to bless the 6 members involved with this. Ask God to use the training and one on one care from the leaders to build up these members, that they will seek and serve God together. (S.Cant Mentors)
17 /5	T H U	Give thanks for Ps. Thomas who is still blessing others with prayer and individual care. (Ps. Thomas)
18 /5	F R I	Please pray for Ps. Kevin, Catherine (chair of BOD) and Philip (chair of Ministry committee), that the grace of God will be evident in their work, family life and physical health. Pray that they will lead with wisdom from God. (S.Cant Leaders)
19 /5	S A T	Thank God for the cell group leaders and assistants in the English congregation. Pray that they will be patient and persistent in caring for the members in their groups and in teaching them God's word. Pray that members of the cell groups will grow in their love for Jesus and their desire to tell their friends about Him. (S.Eng Cell leaders and assistants)
20 /5	S U N	South Mandarin is needing piano players and Sunday school teachers, pray and ask God to prepare brothers and sisters who are willing to serve in these ministries. (S.Mand needing piano worship and Sunday school teachers)
21 /5	M O N	Ps. Thomas is ill, please pray for his wife's (Joy) physical and mental health, as well as her mood, ask God to give her peace in heart! (Joy)
22 /5	T U E	Please remember to pray for those who have not come to church for a while. Pray to God for mercy, that He will call on them to return. (returning members)
23 /5	W E D	North English church planting: ask God to show His will, let us know what kind of church he wants us to start, with what method, and how to motivate members. Pray that this plan will commence in unity from brothers and sisters.

		Pray for opportunities for outreach and events to invite friends and families to, so that they may get to know Jesus. "where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint" ( Proverbs 29:18 )
24 /5	T H U	Pray for the key leaders of PACE who are involved in the 'Vine Project' as they continue to plan and implement various initiatives to develop a clear and straightforward pathway of discipleship for the English congregation. (S.Eng leaders)
25 /5	F R I	South Cantonese congregation is planning to go on STM to Sabah Inland Area during Christmas and planning to equip brothers and sisters for mission with 7 training sessions before hand, so they can better experience God in participation. Please pray for this. (S.Cant STM)
26 /5	S A T	Please pray for the 7 cell groups in S.Mand, ask God to bless the leaders and encourage members to attend so that they will be built up. (S.Mand cell groups)
27 /5	S U N	Ask God to bless the cell group lead by Danny and Monica as well as the group lead by Catherine, Yi, and Gim, that the grace of God will be evident in their work, family life and physical health. Pray that they will lead with God's wisdom (S.Cant leaders and assistants)
28 /5	M O N	Thank God for the feedback we receive from new visitors, that the church feels like a home with its loving and welcoming atmosphere. Pray that we will keep this atmosphere and that the aroma of Christ will be drawing people to Church, so they will be willing to stay and serve God, until they get to know this one true God, and decide to follow Him. (New friends)
29 /5	T U E	Please pray for the north Mandarin ministry committee, that God will bless them with wisdom and insight, so they may serve better in collaboration and in unity. (N.Mand Ministry committee)
30 /5	W E D	There will be a PACE Camp at the end of September 2018. An organising committee is being established and a venue has been booked. Tim Thorburn will be our guest speaker speaking on 'discipleship' from the Gospel of Matthew. Pray that God would empower and guide the organising committee and be at work through the camp to grow our love for and faith in Jesus. (S.Eng Camp)
31 /5	T H U	South Mandarin has already booked a venue for a family camp between 24-26/DEC, there will also be an English youth camp at this time. Please pray for the preparation work. (S.Mand Christmas Camp)

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*Prayer Letter*  
OMF International

*May 2018*

## **Generational differences among China's Christians**



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In 2017, a survey was done on an urban church that was thirty years old. Of the 500 members, about 400 are over thirty. Of that 400, 6% come from Christian families, while the other 94% are first generation Christians. 37% of the church's youth group members are from families within the church.

In traditionally Christian countries, due to their long Christian heritage, many churchgoers come from Christian

families. Even those who do not are somewhat familiar with Christian faith and church culture. However, in many parts of China, Christianity has little in the way of a Christian heritage, and due to the unusually turbulent history of the last century, it is unusual to find Christian families of four generations or more.

Readers who understand church history in China are aware of the rapid growth of

Christianity since the 1980s. Some sociologists in China have even speculated that should this trend continue, Christianity will become the dominant religion in China.

The fact that 90% of believers are first generation Christians confirms the rapid growth of the church. However, it does not necessarily imply that there will be a large number of second and third generation Christians in China in the future. We cannot predict that China will become a “Christian” country with the largest Christian population in the world. Research shows that less than 40% of those in this fast-growing first generation of Christians are able to raise their children as faithful second generation Christians. Interviews with forty church leaders whose church does have youth work, revealed that only two are satisfied with it. The others were not.

Due to the impact of post-modernism, the tendency of 21<sup>st</sup> century young people not to continue in their parents’ faith is not only a challenge in China. But there is one big difference between China and traditionally Christian countries. The large number of first generation Christians, whatever their age, only recently experienced the goodness of God. Of course

they are eager to see their loved ones - especially their children and grandchildren – becoming disciples of Christ, so they are reluctant to allow their children to have their own choice of religion.

Why is the second generation drifting away from their parents’ faith? According to our research, we find three reasons:

First, due to the social changes of recent years, people move around frequently, looking to improve their lives. Although Christian parents may try to take their children to church and Sunday School on a regular basis, constant transitions make it difficult for children to attend regularly. If children grow up without strong Christian influence, they are more easily attracted to non-Christian lifestyles and things they consider more “exciting”. In this way, they are lost to the church. In the rural churches, left behind children once formed the main part of the church. But now, parents often choose to send their children away from the village for education. They not only leave the village they grew up in, they also leave their church community.

*(Continued on page 7)*

## **PRAYER POINTS**

**May 2018**

**1** Today is International Labor Day and the start of the important May holiday week, during which churches have been accustomed to holding special meetings to promote deeper spiritual life. Please pray especially for those churches that are going ahead with such meetings despite the increasingly tight situation this year.

**2** Due to the difficult situation some urban churches in China, beginning in 2008, were forced to hold Sunday worship outdoors, and this is happening again now. Please remember congregations everywhere and especially the leaders that they will hold fast to the Lord and lead the people to follow His heart.

**3** As the economy continues to flourish, many young people migrate to work in the cities, which deeply impacts rural churches. Pray for those evangelists who don't follow this trend and remain in the villages. Especially please remember Brother L; he not only pastors churches in his area, but he also helps with the farm work of Christian families and cares for elderly left behind.

**4** The past few years saw a trend of migrant workers returning home to minister. However, due to the difficulties of adjusting back to rural life and the lack of suitable education for their kids, this trend has been gradually reversing. Now we see a second wave of migration to the cities. Pray for those

who once returned to the villages zealous to minister; may the Lord grant them to soon find the right places to serve and that their families may be settled.

**5** Please pray for a middle-aged evangelist X and his family. He chose to give up his position as senior pastor of a big urban church and uprooted the family to do pioneer church planting back in his remote inland hometown. We thank the Lord for their courageous decision; may He wonderfully lead them and provide for the educational needs of both daughters.

**6** Please pray for J, a rural woman evangelist with a heart to serve migrant workers. She and her husband set up a canteen near the city where the migrants gather. While the workload is heavy and profits minimal, still they find time to hold meetings and talks to introduce Jesus to the laborers. Please pray for their ministries and their two young children.

**7** Please pray for W, an experienced children's worker. As her husband developed cancer and had to stop work and be treated, so, W also had to lay aside ministry in order to care for her husband and work to support the family. Their high-school-aged son is also considering leaving school to find a job. Pray for this family that they may experience God's timely care and provision at this most difficult time.

**8** Please pray for small-town evangelist, L, leading a church focused on university student outreach. Because his wife's meager salary can't cover their daily needs, especially their child's schooling, L must work as an

“Uber-style” driver, often needing to drive long distances and do night shifts. Pray for his safety and that his family may experience God’s Presence.

**9** Please pray for a young couple, H. They had already completed all the paperwork to legally adopt a disabled boy. Now they are preparing for the birth of their own first child. Pray for smooth delivery for his wife and for the adjustment and financial challenges for this new family of four.

**10** Please uphold the family of rural evangelist, L. Being poor, they couldn’t afford to take his wife to hospital even when she fell ill, but had to make do with local traditional treatments. Her condition deteriorated and she is now finally admitted to hospital but has already missed the optimal treatment window. Many rural pastoral workers face the same kinds of problems; please remember them.

**11** Praise God that more and more churches see the importance of pastoring and nurturing “second generation Christians”, and thus related symposiums have been offered in recent years. Through these types of discussion meetings may the Lord enable more workers to learn how to pastor younger generations.

**12** The biggest challenge in dealing with “second generation Christians” in the Chinese church is that their parents, “first generation Christians”, find it hard to understand the feelings of the second generation and lack shared experiences with them, along with no knowledge and experience of how to deal with related issues. May God raise up more professionals and

pastoral workers to study how best to walk with the second generation and establish a firmer foundation for the expansion of Christianity.

**13** Follow up research shows that it is among “PK’s” (pastors’ kids) that the challenges of “second generation Christians” are most apparent. Basically there are two groups of PK’s, A and B. A: those who won’t have anything to do with society and who are thus ignorant and don’t know how to cope with it. When they leave the church environment they can’t function independently. The B’s: if these ones leave home for higher education, then they refuse to join any church activities and even deny their Christian identity. Sometimes they even say they were forced by their parents to be baptized without their consent. Pray for these two groups of challenged young people.

**14** Follow up research furthermore shows that among “PK’s” and offspring of those in ministry, often they have little communication with their parents. The latter are busy with work and ministry to the neglect of their children. These kids often don’t worship in their parents’ churches (in order to avoid idle chatter), which leads them to want to quit church altogether once they get the chance. Pray that those in full time ministry will realize that their own families are a ministry field and their kids are the Lord’s too, and that as parents they have a responsibility to pastor their children.

**15** And more from research: As most “first generation Christians” were pastored by their pastors after joining the church, they consider church the best place for their children to grow spiritually. They often remind their



children to not stop attending church but forget that they themselves are their children's first spiritual mentor. May the Lord teach Christian parents through pastoral instruction to care about and invest more in their children's spiritual growth.

**16**Very few Christian university graduates are willing to go back to their hometown to serve. This has also compounded the drifting away of second generation Christians. May the Lord open up the horizons of young believers to seek their own future not only from the perspective of career development but also from that of the church's needs.

**17**Some pastors suggest that we should not only passively extend the faith to "second generation Christians", but also take initiative to nurture "a second generation that loves the Lord". Praise God for such spiritual insight from the church in China; may it be effective in nurturing more of a "God-loving second generation".

**18**In Chinese society today, there are many different waves of public opinion concerning "the princelings" [politically well-connected offspring of the old elites] and the "rich kids". So believers' families, especially those of full-time ministers, fear to admit that they do have a "second generation" of Christians, because they see the latter as a failure. Let's pray for the young Christians in China to gain a healthy worldview.

**19**Because of lack of resources many Chinese churches do not have professional youth ministers, workers or counselors. Please pray for churches in China to see the importance of training up youth workers.

**20**Some pastors tell us that other than prayers before meals, in many Christian homes there are no regular devotions or Bible reading, let alone discussing issues regarding faith. This is true even in pastors' homes. Let's pray for Chinese Christians to learn the precious tradition in Christian countries of setting up a "family altar" and establishing appropriate family devotions.

**21**Another survey revealed that many young people who grew up attending church with their parents or grandparents are fluent in spiritual terminology, but don't have personal experience of faith. Thus when they enter society there's a great gap between their faith and real life. May God raise up for the Chinese church more pastors and counsellors who understand how young people think and how to lead them on to the path of faith.

**22**Survey results show that "second generation Christians" often have a weak understanding of sin and believe that some false ideas are only matters of individual choice. They find it hard to confess before the Lord their own inappropriate behavior. This lack of ethics education is a problem common to many churches today. May God grant courage and wisdom to pastors to know how to lead their congregations, and that young people may have the right ethical framework and constantly examine themselves before the Lord.

**23**Most pastors in China are "first generation Christians", and although they may have received theological training, their own spiritual experience is still limited. Often their way of pastoring and teaching can be

quite theoretical and not down to earth. May the Lord bring spiritual mentors to help these pastors and encourage them into a deeper walk with the Lord.

**24** A questionnaire distributed at a camp attended by 200 young people showed that 30% said that they “believe in Jesus” or that they’ve “been to church”. Only 2% knew for sure that they are born again. This is quite common in the many camps in China. Let’s pray earnestly for the evangelization of China’s youth.

**25** As in other places in the world, those who participate in short-term missions or social service are mostly young people. They are passionate and lively but may not have much long-term commitment. May the Lord raise many more mature Christians and pastors to be with these young people as their partners and mentors.

**26** The impact of social media upon Chinese youth through mobile phones are increasing. And Christians are no exception. A survey found that it’s quite common for them to play with their phones or chat with friends during Sunday service. May the Lord raise up more Christian media workers to develop suitable software to influence youth.

**27** Please pray for China’s Sunday School teachers. Many “second generation Christians” teach Sunday School, but churches have high expectations of them so they find ministry quite stressful. May the Lord become their motivation to grow and may others see their spiritual maturity as a beautiful testimony to Him.

**28** Reports are that in certain areas in central China, all children’s work in all churches, regardless of their affiliation [whether officially registered, or house churches], has been forced to stop. Pray for the Sunday School and other ministries of affected churches, that God would grant wisdom to the pastors to know how to continue ministering to children.

**29** Even though we don’t have complete statistics, nevertheless we know there are many Chinese middle and high schoolers studying overseas. Some overseas churches have been reaching out to these “parachute kids”. May God bless and use this special ministry.

**30** “Parachute kids” usually stay with host families overseas. Chinese believers’ families hope their kids may be able to board with other Christian families, but cultural differences may make it very hard for the child to adapt. One high-schooler, “S”, couldn’t find a suitable host family and had to return home. Pray for this child’s re-entry adaptation and for other students overseas who will have the same experience. May these different cultural experiences exercise their Christian faith.

**31** Tomorrow is Children’s day in China. Over recent years as some churches have promoted respect for life and encouraged young people to avoid abortion, this message has begun to be heard in some cities. May God bless this ministry and cause respect for His sovereignty over life to become widely accepted in China.

*(Continued from page 2)*

Secondly, due to enormous pressure on students, families who can afford it will send their children to boarding school for junior high, senior high and even primary school. In China, religious activities are forbidden in public boarding schools, so children from Christian families can only attend church and Sunday School when they return home during holidays. While at school, they cannot openly confess their faith. This disconnection between faith and daily life, on top of the heavy workload at school and the challenges of exams, makes it difficult for them to continue in their faith.

Thirdly, Christian students in college enjoy more freedom than those in high schools. Although they need to exercise caution concerning their faith, they are able to participate in fellowship and church activities on campus. School work can take up most of their time, so many students choose to listen to sermons and read their Bibles online, and they have virtual fellowship with other Christians. This may continue until they graduate from college and start working. In the workplace, due to a highly competitive and stressful environment, it is very challenging to maintain involvement in a church.

These three factors well describe life in today's China, and the effect on second generation Christians. As time goes by, this second generation of Christians will lose any passion for their parents' faith, and as a result they will be lost to the church. Rapid economic growth has also had an impact – it has changed the value system, which not only affects the general public, but also Christian communities - especially the second generation Christians. Whether rural or urban, most first generation Christians were born between 1960 and the early 1980s. They were born and raised during the Cultural Revolution and early stages of reform. They experienced rapid economic development and thanked God for improvements in their lives. The second generation of Christians were born after 1990, when China's economy was doing well; they never experienced the sort of hardship that their parents did. As a result, they tend to be less disciplined. Research done by Christians revealed that suicide attempts, violence, sexual immorality, addictions and theft are much more common among this generation, and there is little difference between those in the church and those outside the church. Societal and peer pressures have a much bigger impact on young people than their parents.

Chinese Christian parents have tried hard to take care of their children's spiritual needs. For the past decade or so, some churches have tried to open their own schools to educate the next generation. But running Christian schools has proved to be very challenging. Churches also hold summer and winter camps – and they see these as very important forms of youth work.

We cannot depend on “activities” to solve the problem of losing

second generation Christians. The first generation Christians have limited experience in terms of Christian faith and life. In order to impact their children positively, parents need to model Christian family life as well as teaching them the Bible. In order to pass on their faith, they need to establish family worship times and read the Bible and pray together. Let us pray that these Christian families will grow stronger and more united in their faith.

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