Double Reduction Policy

It’s been a disconcerting couple of months for our friends and co-workers in China’s education industries.

Confusion and panic erupted as word began circulating that big changes were afoot in the private sector. And sure enough, on July 23rd 2021, the Chinese government pounded the industry and its investors by releasing a draft policy that will require firms operating private tutoring and education services to convert to non-profit. New start-ups will not be allowed. Also banned will be core-curriculum tutoring of school children during weekends and vacations, foreign curricula and text books, and hiring foreigners outside of China to teach remotely.

The document was titled, “On the further alleviation of
compulsory education: Opinions on the burden of homework and after-school tutoring”.

Also among the 30 measures offered were steps to reduce homework, standardize education services and ban online tutoring of preschoolers. The policy will first be trialled in 9 major cities including Beijing and Shanghai beginning September, before being extended to the whole country.

It's well known that children in China suffer from intense academic competition, and unrelenting study schedules that stretch well beyond school hours. These new laws will provide relief – at least during the holidays. But easing stress is not the primary motivation behind the laws. Rather, the government hopes to ease the burden on its upper-middle-class parents who feel they must invest heavily in their child's education to give them a head start. By preventing parents from spending money on online English tutors, expensive private education, and test preparation tutoring for entrance exams into middle and high schools, it's hoped they will now consider investing in raising another child and help the nation with its crippling demographic problems.

Of course there are other drivers for the change, such as seeking greater equity in the education field and the ever present desire of the state to combat ‘foreign influence’ and maintain total control over ideological education.

There are a large number of teachers outside of China working remotely via Chinese based online ESL (English as a second language) companies. These companies are allowed to complete the delivery of service packages already paid up front before the 8th August. But the offshore teachers are now fearful they may not receive their final salary as their Chinese employers feel the impact of the law change. Many teachers are already racing to find work with companies in other nations, and abandoning contracts, in order to keep bread on the table.

With their permitted work hours now limited to after school during weekdays (with teaching after 9.00 at night banned since April) and during the school term, tutoring companies are freezing hiring, inflicting pay cuts and are frantically redirecting their services to adult teaching, parenting courses (an emerging market) or elsewhere.

On top of this, rumours have been circulating that the government wants to close down every English training school. All schools have recently been inspected. Thankfully, our co-workers say their schools have passed inspections with flying colours. Despite this, some schools have been ‘advised’ by local
A nation can choose its friends, but it can’t choose its neighbours. China shares a short section of border (76kms) with Afghanistan. From the border, a pan-handle of land 350 km (220 mi) long and 13–65 km (8–40 mi) wide, known as the Wakhan Corridor, stretches across high mountain valleys to the rest of Afghanistan. Both sides of the border are currently nature reserves, but historically the mountain pass between the nations formed part of the ancient silk route network. In fact, this was the route that Marco Polo was actually said to travel.

In the 2000s, Afghanistan asked China on several occasions to open this border for economic reasons or as an alternative supply route for fighting the Taliban insurgency. However, China resisted, partly due to unrest in its own Xinjiang Province and no doubt because of Afghanistan’s drug industry. In December 2009, it was again reported that the USA had asked China (unsuccessfully) to open the corridor. But now, with America flown, and with the Taliban in charge, once again there is talk of turning the cul-de-sac into a major trade route.

Until recently, only a dirt track gave access from the western end, reaching to about half way along the corridor. Onward travel east to China was only possible by foot or with pack animals. However, recent Belt and Road construction has extended the drivable track to around three quarters of the corridor. The people living there are peaceful.

Should the Wakhan project progress, it could see Kabul become a major hub in Eurasia. It lies between China and Iran, from whom China has just secured

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**International Short-Term Teams**

Email CCSM at teams@amccsm.org to find out what we have on offer.
cheap oil and gas as part of a $US400 billion trade deal in March. Kabul is also a crossroad on the planned north-south trade route from Russia passing through Afghanistan and on to Peshawar in Pakistan and the Gwadar Port via high speed rail. It should be noted that Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan signed a request seeking a loan of $4.8bn from the World Bank for this rail project linking Tashkent-Kabul-Peshawar in January 2021. This would open up Central Asia to the Indian Ocean.

Gazing into the future, irrigation projects from China’s mountains to the Central Asian grasslands, and canal networks to the Mediterranean have also been rumoured, both world changing projects should they ever go ahead.

As the world enters a second period of cold war, it seems to be dividing into two distinct blocks, vying for dominance. Eurasia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in the East, and NATO and the EU in the West. China’s ties with Russia are strengthening with largescale joint military exercises in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous region of China being conducted in August.

Afghanistan is rich in minerals that China requires. Conversely, China has a lot to offer the long-suffering Afghan people who have endured war far too long. Roads, rail, energy projects and pipe lines would be mutually beneficial but require huge investments and loans. And no investor would throw money in without assurance of peace and security. Afghanistan may have little choice but to accept China’s assistance to rebuild, in combination with its version of security.

Certainly God, who puts leaders into power, can see more clearly into the future than mere man’s speculations. One thing He would probably want to bring to our attention, is the 40 different tribal peoples in Afghanistan’s mountains that do not have the Word in their language and the desperate need of the nation to hear the message of Jesus Christ. If there is a window of opportunity, however brief, let us prepare to partner with Chinese believers to reach them, and to assist the Afghanistan church. It was only earlier this year they told us they were planning on coming out of hiding. How things have changed.
Churches Targeted For Persecution

CCP demands ‘united front’; all who resist will be persecuted.

Xuncheng Reformed Church is an unregistered church in the Shanxi Province capital, Taiyuan. Possibly due to its close connections with Chengdu’s Early Rain Covenant Church and its imprisoned Pastor Wang Yi, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has Xuncheng RC in its sights, targeted for persecution. On Sunday 15 November 2020 police raided the church and ordered it to be shut. On 30 December police arrested Pastor An Yankui in his home as he led a group bible study. Pastor An subsequently spent 15 days in administrative detention. On 7 July Pastor An’s long-time friend and ministry co-worker Zhao Wikai (35; married with three young children) was arrested and charged with ‘unlawfully possessing items that advocate terrorism or extremism’.

On 28 July police arrested five more Christians from Xuncheng RC. According to Pastor An, the arrests came after a church member from Fenyang City named Zhang Ligong was arrested on 13 July and held for 15 days in administrative detention. When Zhang was released, the church co-workers who went to collect him were arrested on the spot while three other co-workers were arrested at their homes. According to Pastor An, all five had flown to Malaysia in January last year to attend the ‘KL2020 Gospel and Culture’ Christian conference, hosted by the prominent Chinese Indonesian pastor Stephen Tong and featuring speakers such as Pastors Tim Keller and DA Carson.
Many anticipate that trumped up charges will be levelled against the five arrested church members as the CCP ramps up the persecution. Please pray.

With some 50,000 members, Shanxi’s unregistered Golden Lampstand house church network has long been in the CCP’s sights, targeted for persecution. On Saturday 7 August police in Shanxi’s southern Linfen county arrested nine church members - including Pastors Wang Xiaoguang and Yang Rongli (Wang’s wife) - and detained them in the capital, Taiyuan. Pastors Wang and Yang have previously been jailed for their religious activities; they were sentenced in November 2009 to three years and seven years respectively after they sought to petition the government over a violent raid which left around 100 church members wounded (some seriously) and the church’s meeting place - a Christian-owned factory in Linfen city’s Fushan County - looted and demolished. Despite persistent severe persecution, the church has steadfastly refused to register and thereby submit itself to CCP oversight. On 9 January 2018, three weeks before the CCP’s new Religious Affairs Regulations came into effect, police armed with dynamite and bulldozers demolished Golden Lampstand’s new central worship facility in Linfen. The facility had been high on the CCP’s hit-list for years.

Along with Pastors Wang Xiaoguang and Yang Rongli, an unknown number of church members were taken to their local police stations for questioning. A church member told Radio Free Asia (9 August): ‘They detained Wang Xiaoguang and eight other people. It was probably because they were carrying out a house church baptism ... We won’t change our beliefs, nor will we join the [CCP-approved] Three-Self Patriotic Association.’ Please pray.

Source: Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 610 | 11 Aug 2021 by Elizabeth Kendal

His Grace Abounds In 2021

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.” 2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV

The CEO of a partner NGO that works in China writes:

“Our God’s grace is abundant. He always provides what we need, when we need it. Often we don’t realise how abundantly He provides until we can look back and see what He has done!”

In recent years, NGO’s in China have not
Double Reduction Policy

Remember Christian teachers before God who are laid off as a result of the 720 Policy, both in and out of China. Ask the Father to help them find new employment.

Pray for teachers close to retirement who may have difficulty obtaining retirement packages after being out of their countries, or that find it difficult to find other employment opportunities.

Pray for peace in the hearts and minds of teachers during this disconcerting time.

Pray that any special friendships built with students can be upkept through WeChat or other sources so that these students will not feel abandoned.

Pray more Christian teachers will actually go and teach in person in China.

High Road To Change

Pray for the deliverance of God’s people from harm in Afghanistan.

Pray that the desires of the wicked will not succeed, lest they be exalted. (Ps. 140)

Pray that God will prepare a way for His Word to reach people in Afghanistan.

Pray that mission-hearted Chinese will be given opportunities to connect with Afghans and to effectively share the gospel.

Churches Targeted For Persecution

Pray that the Father will bless believers in Xuncheng Reformed Church and supply all their needs; may Christ our Good Shepherd guide Pastor An Yankui and all the church’s leaders as they lead Christ’s flock through challenging and testing times.

Ask that the Holy Spirit physically, emotionally and spiritually sustain Zhao Wikai and the five new prisoners as they endure interrogation, isolation and separation from loved ones amidst great uncertainty.

Pray for God’s blessing and encouragement for his followers involved in the long-persecuted Golden Lampstand house church network; may Pastors Wang Xiaoguang and Yang Rongli rest assured that nothing ‘will be able to separate [them] from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Romans 8:35-39).
His Grace Abounds In 2021

Praise God that through His Grace, he provides a way to triumph over all challenges.

Pray for the staff of this NGO, who have battled on regardless and seen lives changed for the good in the most difficult of circumstances.

Pray for all those whose lives they touch, that not only will they gain education and healing but true hope for the future as well.

The Müller Connection

Praise God that he has given some great faith so that others can be encouraged by their testimony, especially in times of trial.

Pray that the Church in China may grasp God’s love for them and his desire to care for them. [1Peter 5:6]

Thank God that through Christ, believers everywhere belong to one body, with Him as the head. Thank Him that we can cast our cares on Him.

Ask God who you can encourage, mentor or support. Remember them in prayer so that they may be strengthened and the Lord’s message might be preached through them.

News From CCSM Australia

Praise the Lord for one NGO Mercy ministry that we are in partnership with in China that has not only survived but thrived! Although the Covid situation presented unusual challenges they have seen first-hand that the virus cannot stop God’s grace.

Praise the Lord that our other ministries inside of China are doing well and fulfilling the Lord’s purposes.

Pray for the Lord to reveal His perfect plan for CCSM in all the waiting regarding teams and the “going to China” etc.

Pray for a good response for our various appeals that are constantly sent out.
had an easy time as they deal with new government regulations. Not only is the compliance process more protracted but other rules greatly impact their ability to raise funds and even the nature of their work.

So it is cause for praise and thanks that this particular NGO has not only survived but thrived! Although the Covid situation presented unusual challenges they have seen first-hand that the virus cannot stop God’s grace.

Working amongst minority people in remote and poor communities, the pandemic meant a shift in focus for this NGO. Teams and Summer Camps were put on hold and the local staff focused on orphanage work, sponsorship of students as well as helping families with complex medical needs. The Lord had given this work abundant favour not only with the people but with Government agencies as well! Incredibly, the local government filmed a news story and wrote an article which was published throughout the province.

They wrote: “...this NGO’s acts of kindness help people in need like a spring that never dries up … they are angels on earth. They are the most ordinary people but they are always doing things that make other people lives happier.” The long article describes the significant impact the team has had on literally thousands of lives. It highlights the love the team brings into harsh working conditions and the deep impact on those with severe needs.

In spite of Covid, more than fifty students from poor villages have been sponsored into university study in the provincial capital. Staff meet these students and their families and take them to worship gatherings, so whole families, not just students are cared for.

Special needs therapy continues daily at an orphanage in a regional town.

Other staff are reaching out to local merchants who have lost their businesses due to the virus, and are providing free health screenings in the local marketplace.

An eye clinic run by the NGO continues to provide life changing surgery to villagers.

In spite of all the challenges, God has shown His work is not held back by a pandemic. He may lead his servants along a different path for a while but He provides an abundance of grace for every good work.
The Müller Connection

In the year 1835, many might be surprised to know, there were only a dozen orphan houses in all of England and Wales. Yet orphans were common. In Bristol orphans were rampant, and it was here that George Müller first converted his home to an orphanage. The city had experienced a cholera epidemic, and food prices were sky high because of the corn taxes (imposed after the Napoleonic wars). Some estimates had as many as 250,000 homeless children roaming the streets of Bristol, starving, stealing and begging or in work houses.

Müller’s work grew and in his lifetime his houses fed and educated over 10,000 orphans. Yet he never once asked for money. Müller set his heart to rely only on prayer, God’s Word and God’s provision. It was important to him that the children were not only fed but knew that the Lord was the only one who had provided their needs. He was never in debt, a fact his scrupulously kept, publicly available accounting records showed.

The famous author, Charles Dickens, after hearing rumours about children starving, came to inspect the facilities personally. Müller, being too busy, left him in the care of two orphans to show him around. He was so impressed by what he saw, he wrote a newspaper article describing the high standard of care!

So, you ask, how does this relate to China?

Müller was a faithful encourager, mentor and supporter of Hudson Taylor and the work of the China Inland Mission. In fact, Taylor was stimulated to ‘live by
Greetings friends and pray-ers! In this update we felt that we would like to bring a word of encouragement to all of us taking into consideration all the heaviness and sad news that is put in front of our eyes in these times. We are not by any means underplaying or minimizing the reality of what is happening, but we as believers and pray-ers need to be steadfast and take comfort and strength from the Lord. Hence this scripture from the Psalms!

“...but if it were otherwise, had you even no one to care for you, or did you a least seem to be in a position as if no one cared you, you will always have the Lord to be with you. Remember Paul’s case at Rome (2 Timothy 4: 16-18). ‘At my first defence, no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me so that the message might be preached through me, that all the gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of a lion, the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for his heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever, amen.’

My Dear Hudson, on Him then reckon, to Him look, on Him depend, and be assured if you walk with Him and look to Him and expect help from Him, He will never fail you. An older brother, who has known the Lord for forty-four years, who writes this, says to you for your encouragement that He has never failed him. In the greatest difficulties, the heaviest trials, in the deepest poverty and necessities, He has never failed me; but, because I was enabled by His grace to trust in Him, He has always appeared for my help. I delight in speaking well of His name. With great affection, George Müller”

[more at www.georgemuller.org]

News From CCSM Australia
scripture is "WAIT ON THE LORD" and when we look at what we at CCSM are currently doing, along with other mission organisation involved in China. It is, in a sense, a lot to do with waiting. There are some of our long term missionaries who want to go back into China but cannot. They are waiting.

There are short-term teams that in past years regularly went into China, they too are waiting. There are various projects that need to be visited, and those who often go there are also waiting.

There are missionaries in China who would normally get visited by our member care team and both sides are waiting.

However in our waiting we are still about the Father’s business. There are various appeals CCSM is doing such as the Chinese Pastors Financial Support in China. Support and that is happening from a distance. We praise the Lord that our co-workers inside of China are doing well and that is why your prayers are so important. Support that is happening as we pray. Praise the Lord!

In a sense we are all waiting but let us take encouragement from this scripture that in our waiting we (a) do not lose heart, (b) we always look and see the goodness of the Lord each and every day, (c) be of good courage, and (d) that He will strengthen our hearts as we wait.

No matter the challenges before us as a ministry, God has shown His work will not be held back or hindered by any crisis as we wait upon Him.

Richest Blessings,

Murray Cameron
Director, CCSM Australia