



CCSM
Chinese Church
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China Prayer Letter

APRIL 2025



Chinese artificial intelligence (AI) start-up DeepSeek, has sent shock waves through the US, the world and China's job market. Billions of dollars were wiped from sharemarkets, with semiconductor stocks such as Nvidia sold off as investors worried DeepSeek's efficiencies would dampen enthusiasm for AI infrastructure spending.

DeepSeek stunned the tech world with its low-cost, high-performing large language model, rivalling or even surpassing in some respects ChatGPT – an AI chatbot developed by San Francisco based company, OpenAI.

DeepSeek, soon after its launch, became one of the most

downloaded apps worldwide.

However, at the time of writing (late Feb 2025) the US is considering banning it and a number of countries including Australia, Italy, and Taiwan have blocked it from use in Government departments. A major concern is over how the Chinese AI company collects and uses the data of its users. And certain topics, for example around Chinese politics and history, have been blocked, throwing doubt on the app's credibility and impartiality.

In China the advent of DeepSeek was met with pride but also anxiety as concerns over AI's impact on the job market grew. Many companies

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are already planning lay-offs as automation takes over repetitive tasks. Young jobseekers are being forced to rethink their options in a rapidly changing landscape, as AI reshapes employment opportunities. These concerns may in time prove unfounded, at least for university graduates as many think it will be only those repetitive and mundane jobs that will be lost. (In 2025, a record 12.22 million university graduates will join the job market).

In a surprise development, young people in China are using DeepSeek for a different purpose. It

seems as if many are using the app for therapy sessions. They say that so real and insightful are the chatbox's responses that many are moved to tears.

In a recent BBC story, Kelly Ng described how young Chinese, anxious about their future, are turning to DeepSeek for counsel and comfort. One young woman was quoted as "being moved to tears" as the bot counselled her on the shattering loss of her grandmother.

"DeepSeek has been an amazing counsellor. It has helped me to look at things from a different perspective and does a better job than the paid counsellors."

The BBC article also sought comment from Nan Jia of the University of Southern California, who has written extensively about AI's potential to offer emotional support. Kelly Ng's article quotes her as saying:

**"Friends and family may be quick to offer practical solutions or advice when people just want to be heard and understood."
"AI appears to be better able to empathise than human experts."**

Many young Chinese are finding that to be true. Some claim that DeepSeek is even able to "tell their fortunes". Many young people, suffering from depression, are not able to find professional medical help, and are turning to psychics and astrologists. DeepSeek is a new option.

As Christians with a love for China, we at CCSM find this very disturbing. It emphasizes why we need to pursue our founding goals of serving, strengthening and supporting the church in China – all the while praying for the nation of China. Historically there has never been any lasting peace found in the advice of psychics or astrologers. And we know that it will not be found through a DeepSeek bot!

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:58

As I ponder on this verse, I would like to remind each one of us to do just what this verse is saying, and how it is applicable to us all in one way or the other. Such an encouraging, but nevertheless challenging scripture! There are many scriptures calling us to various ministries. We are all called to serve in various parts of the Lord's vineyard for the work of His Kingdom, to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ. Our calling may differ, however, each one of us is called to the

ministry of prayer. Any efforts on our part we make when serving the Lord, unless covered in prayer, will be fruitless. So, with that in mind,

‘our beloved friends and brethren be steadfast, immovable and always abounding in prayer as a vital and necessary part of the work of the Lord.’

We see from the many scriptures in the Word that the Lord loved praying and communicating with the Father in Heaven.

I would like to repeat this quote again from an earlier update by Andrew Murray who said,

“Where there is much prayer, there will be much of the Spirit. Where there is much of the Spirit there will be ever-increasing prayer.” Amen.

Let us take this to heart and ask the Lord to give heed to the cry of our voices knowing that He will hear us, and that our labour in prayer is never in vain.

- Richard Anderson, who with his wife Bernice leads CCSM's prayer ministry, provides this China prayer focused devotional. Richard and Bernice are CCSM Directors in South Africa.





A TEACHER WHO DOESN'T GIVE UP

“Glenn” has spent many years as a foreign English teacher in China and worked closely with our CCSM Cultural Exchange Teams. He has always taken every opportunity under the curriculum umbrella of “Western Culture” to share the real meaning of Christian festivals including Christmas and Easter. CCSM teams enjoyed many hours in Glenn’s classrooms with freedom to share our life and faith. Many long-term cross-cultural friendships trace their first meeting back to those classrooms.

As things have tightened in China, keeping in touch with Glenn has become more difficult. He has needed to reduce risks and take extra care to ensure he can continue to have his contract and visa extended – believing that God has called him to China for the long haul. Whilst feeling isolated and at times anxious, he refuses to give up. He is currently on a short break in his home country and has been able to share with our Prayer Letter Editor to give us an insight into what it is like for a foreign teacher in the post-covid China.

- Surprisingly Glenn tells us there are still large numbers of foreign teachers, at least in his large city which has multiple university campuses. Many, as has always been the case, are believers sent through various mission agencies. They are still able to meet together in “international fellowships” without interference and have good numbers attending. (There were instances in the recent past when international fellowships were under close scrutiny and had government officials attending.)
- Local churches that he has

contact with have shrunk further back into the shadows. Many are being investigated with the focus on the churches' finances. Treasurers are often called in alongside pastors. Ostensibly this is based on the Government's suspicion that there may be scams and misappropriation of funds. They are always concerned at any kind of underground economy that they cannot control or see.

- Glenn continues to have the confidence of his university and has no difficulty getting his contract extended year by year. The university arranges his visa. Whilst all classrooms have cameras (as they have had for a number of years), he does not believe in his case they are monitored too closely. Usually they pay more attention at the beginning of the year as they assess possibly political or religious agendas of new students. The practice of having student party officials appointed to every class continues.

- Access to universities is now strictly controlled. Access for CCSM teams prior to 2019 had never been a problem. Whilst all gates had security, we were rarely checked or challenged. Glenn says that all universities in his

city use iris recognition and it would be hard to circumvent it. Things have gone from casual to airport security standard.

- Glenn noticed that Christmas, which is not a holiday in China, is now almost publically invisible. Whilst once shops, mall and street displays did at least present the commercial side of Christmas, these were mostly gone in 2024.

- Most of the English Corners that were prevalent before Covid have stopped, or been stopped both in universities (most previously had one) and in private café type venues.

- What is still possible, is the opportunity to take groups of students to lunch, away from cameras and supervision. He does this often.

Glenn is trusting God to protect him and give him opportunity to share Christ with his students in every way that still remains open. And he believes that this phase in China will not last forever. That there will be a day when China once again has religious freedom.

Many Chinese Christians, especially church leaders, have been imprisoned on charges of "fraud", because their churches accept tithes and donations. Some pastors and leaders have been put in prison and charged with criminally deceiving their congregants in spite of their protests they are following Biblical practices. Other Christians who have made gifts to their churches have been pressured to testify against their church leaders, or faced charges themselves.



PERSECUTION

—“GOD’S WORK IN OUR LIVES.”

In November 2017, Wang Yi, pastor of the Chengdu Early Rain Covenant Church, wrote an open letter to his congregation outlining the benefits of persecution! A year later, as attacks on churches increased in China, he himself was sent to prison for 9 years.

China had already demonstrated its resilience to persecution during the Mao years, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, 1966 to 1976. Whilst China was in isolation and Western churches assumed the worst, Christianity in China spread and grew in one of the most extraordinary stories of church growth in history. Persecution, far from killing the church, became a catalyst for growth.

Wang Yi makes 20 points in his pastoral letter, the theme of which is that persecution reveals the true Christian heart and purifies the church. Some sample quotes:

“The possibility of persecution is a test to see if, out of fear of death, we choose to become slaves. Have our hearts truly been set free by the gospel, and will they remain honourable under any system and in any environment?”

“Persecution is a test to see if we place value on the evaluation of the world or on the praise of Christ.”

“One of the most significant benefits of persecution is that any Christian who faces it cannot continue as a silent disciple.”

“Every church-state conflict is a moment for God to cleanse His church. Through persecution, God expels false ‘believers’ from the church and exposes false teachers.”

“Therefore every church v state conflict in history is a moment in which God’s kingdom moves forward. It requires believers to stop living like they are on vacation and return to their posts.

Conflicts between the church and the state puts an end to any false state of peace and instead reveals the universal truth of continual ongoing spiritual warfare. In this war the real hindrance is not the world or the government but the power of sin and fear in a believer’s life.”

“The greatest benefit of church-state conflict is our union with a Christ who was himself judged. Caesar’s focus was not whether you believed in Jesus but whether you believe he is ‘the King’. Persecution forces us to answer the world in the same way we answer the Lord. ‘Yes, He is the King’!

In this way we allow the police to tear their clothes and say, ‘What else can we say? They are inciting subversion of state power.’”

And finally addressing his congregation Wang Yi writes:

“Test yourself to see if you are crazy for the gospel. When you are threatened with death for the gospel, you find out for whom you really live. When you may lose fortune and position for the sake of the gospel, you find out whether you are crazy for money or crazy for the gospel. Consider everything a loss and see suffering as trivial.”

Wang Yi remains in prison with no contact with the outside world since 2018.

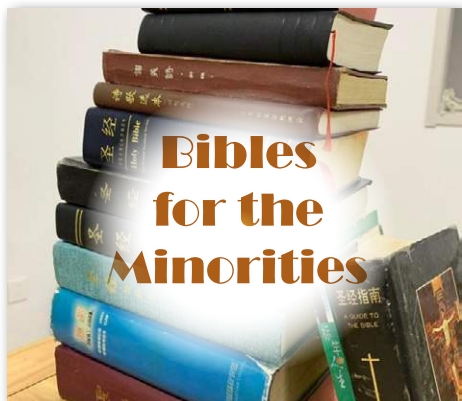
Quotes from Wang Yi from “Faithful Disobedience”. Edited by Hannah Nation and J D Tseng.

Delving deeper into scripture to enrich our prayer for China

1 John 1:5. “This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.”

Some say you cannot have light without darkness. In biblical terms, Satan brought darkness into our world, but the Bible declares that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. Heaven has no lighting apart from God’s Presence. **May His light penetrate the depths of China.**





"The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue". William Townsend – founder, Wycliffe Bible Translators.

The Bible in Revelation Chapter 7 speaks of "a great multitude that none could count, from every nation, tribe and people standing before the throne and before the Lamb."

Whilst the China Government recognises 55 minorities (including the Dong we wrote about last month), there are estimated to be around 500 across China. They speak close to 300 languages but only a few have a written system. Over the years, many missionaries have served amongst the minorities, learning their ways and languages and often translating the scriptures in their languages.

J.O. Fraser is a great example. Arriving in China in 1908 with the China Inland Mission (CIM – now OMF), he lived amongst

the West Lisu people of Yunnan. Like many of his predecessors, he learned the language and developed a writing system into which he translated the New Testament. Over time, Lisu Bible teachers and evangelists were raised up.

Today, 30% of Lisu people are Christians and still use the official J.O. Fraser translation!

The gospel was first brought to the Miao people by a missionary, Samuel Pollard, in 1904. The term "Miao" gained official status in 1949 and encompasses a group of linguistically related ethnic minorities in Southwest China. At that time, as the Miao language did not have a written script, Pollard invented one and then taught the people how to read and write. The Miao New Testament was first published in 1917. A pastor, Wang Mingji said: "For thousands of years, we have been like the blind!" A revival broke out amongst one subgroup called the "Big Flowery Miao" with not just individual converts but households and entire villages! The revival spread amongst other divisions of the Miao.

The Pollard script is also still in use today. After the Cultural Revolution, as

churches reopened in the early 1980's there was a dire need for Bibles. The Three Self Patriotic Movement (the official Government controlled church organisation) was early off the mark to print ethnic minority Bibles (in 1983, 15,000 Lisu Bibles, 10,000 Miao New Testaments and some Wa New Testaments.) But it was only the establishment of the APC (Amity Printing Company) that significant numbers of Bibles in minority languages came on stream.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, still only a handful of ethnic minorities had the Word of God in their heart language. But slow and steady progress is being made. The East Lisu New Testament was launched in 2009. The full East Lisu Bible in 2016. In the same year the Wa Bible was published. The White Yi received the New Testament in 2015. The Black Yi welcomed the Bible in their heart language in 2018.

It is difficult to get accurate information about the progress of translation into other minority languages. Many different organisations and agencies are involved and security is essential. Please pray for this important work.

(Some information in this article from "Banned Book to Bestseller" by Cynthia Oh, published by William Carey Publishing).



Prayer Points

APRIL 2025

Join us in prayer for the church of China.
Cut out this month's prayer points and
keep them in your Bible.



PRAYER POINTS #1

DEEPSEEK IMPACTS ON MANY FRONTS

Pray that as AI technology becomes increasingly part of everyday life, that Christians will seek and find ways to use it for God's glory.

Pray that all governments, including the People's Republic of China, will recognize not just the advantages of AI, but also the dangers and respond with appropriate legislation.

Cry out for the youth of China, who face uncertain futures as AI is embraced in China. Pray they will not be deceived into following psychics, astrologists and fortune tellers, but will reach out to the True God who brings hope through Jesus.

PRAYER POINTS #2

PRAYER DEVOTIONAL

Lord, we want to be those who are called and recognised as fervent pray-ers.

Help us to be steadfast and abounding in the calling of prayer and let it be seen that we keep ourselves in the love of God. May our prayer life lead us to a non-compromising and ever-deepening relationship with You.

We cry out as did Nehemiah, that Your ear, O Lord, would be attentive to our supplications. Hear O Lord, the prayers of Your servants which we bring before You now, day and night.

PRAYER POINTS #3

A TEACHER WHO DOESN'T GIVE UP

Pray for Glenn and his family who feel isolated and often lonely. Pray that they will continue to have opportunity to meet like-minded friends and have good fellowship opportunities.

Pray for his safety as he continues to be an ambassador for Christ in a land that "officially" rejects Christianity.

Pray for the students who now have much reduced exposure to the Gospel and that through faithful workers like Glenn, seeds can continue to be sown.

Serving, Supporting & Strengthening
the Church and People of China





Prayer Points

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“With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints.” [Eph 6:18, NET]

PRAYER POINTS #4

PERSECUTION – “GOD”S WORK IN OUR LIVES.”

Pray for Wang Yi as he continues to serve out his 9 year sentence. Pray for his health and the peace that will come from knowing God is in control and that any suffering is, in his own words, “trivial”.

Pray for the members of his congregation who continue to face uncertainty. Pray they will also know peace and will continue to encourage and inspire others who face similar challenges.

Pray that the church in China will continue to stand boldly producing both personal development and numerical growth as they proclaim “Yes, He is the King!”

PRAYER POINTS #5

BIBLES FOR THE MINORITIES

Pray that those involved in translation into minority heart languages will be well supported, well financed and protected from any attempts to hinder their work.

Pray for those minorities who have already had the Bible completed in their own tongue.

Pray that as William Townsend said these scriptures will be the “greatest missionary”. Pray that the printers will also have ongoing permission to publish and print as translations are completed.

PRAYER POINTS #6

FROM WECHAT TO REDNOTE

Praise God for the opportunity CCSM had over many years through their various teams, to make long lasting friendships with a wide cross section of Chinese from students to the elderly. Pray that the seeds sown will continue to bear fruit.

Pray that the advent of RedNote will continue to bring together youth from the wider world with Chinese young people and produce a new opportunity through cultural exchange for believers to share their life and faith.

Pray that RedNote and future equivalents will break through imposed barriers allowing a free interchange of ideas and providing a new avenue for the Gospel to penetrate into China.

From WeChat to RedNote



A CCSM Cultural Exchange Team Leader spoke to us about the new social media sensation dubbed “RedNote” in the West or Xiaohongshu as it is officially called in its country of origin, China.

Speaking to our Prayer Letter Editor, our Team Leader recalls his own first visits to China when communication within the team was via text on old style phones with all members needing to get local telecom company accounts. He says:

“A communication revelation was unfolding from 2011 when the newly minted WeChat (WeiXin) hit the market and exploded! From 2012 onwards, this became increasingly how we talked to each other but more importantly how we kept in touch with the thousands of students

we were meeting as part of our cultural exchange programmes.

Many of our team members continue to this day to be part of the lives of those university students. We have had the joy of sharing graduations, first job experiences, promotions, marriages and births! WeChat enabled us to keep in touch after we went home and led to many of our long-distance friends visiting us in our own home countries. We knew the risks of sharing on an open network but took comfort in the fact that almost the entire population of China had a WeChat account – especially as the related WeChat Pay system became commonplace. (By 2024 there were 1.37 billion subscribers to WeChat – most in Mainland China.)

WeChat for us became an aid for friendship evangelism and whilst it is a heavily scrutinized and censored network, we were careful to keep our conversations ‘light’.”

From late 2024, the widely used app TikTok became the subject of international controversy. TikTok, owned by Chinese internet company ByteDance, surpassed 2 billion mobile downloads in 2020 and is one of the world's most popular social media platforms.

TikTok has come under scrutiny due to data privacy violations, misinformation, offensive content, and its role during the Israel–Hamas war. But of even more concern is the possible user data collection by the Chinese Government through ByteDance, in which it holds a golden share.

[In 2021, a fund backed by the Cyberspace Administration of China, a government regulator and censor, along with two other state entities bought a 1% stake in ByteDance's main Chinese subsidiary for 2 million yuan, obtaining the right to name one of three directors to the unit's board.]

TikTok was banned in the USA in January 2025 on security grounds but given a stay by the newly-elected President Trump at least until discussions take place with ByteDance.

Cue the advent of TikTok refugees! Hundreds of thousands of TikTok users in America have moved to the Mandarin language based RedNote! This has sparked a grassroots cultural exchange between Chinese and American youth. American youth are actively engaging with Chinese youth, sharing the problems they face and learning about how their Chinese equivalents live their lives. Young people on both sides are changing their perceptions long built up by the information walls of

governments. Stereotypes are being broken down.

Whilst it is possible that this will be just a brief moment in time, extinguished by the revival of TikTok or the intervention of the Chinese Government, it hints at a hopeful future where youths bypass government-initiated barriers and speak to each other face-to-face.

In a way, just as the CCSM cultural exchange programmes brought people together and destroyed misconceptions, showing us all not how different we are but how similar!

Perhaps as we saw the potential of WeChat to revolutionise our work in China, so RedNote or future iterations may do the same on a much larger scale.



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