

**China Church Ministry Working Report 2019 -- Summary**

***Work in the Bitter Winter***

**Striving Forward Through the Bitter Winter**

© Otto Lui  
Associate General Secretary (Training)

Last year, many churches and organizations involved in China church ministries were called off and the pressure on church workers was mounting. Many mainland churches were facing difficulties they haven't encountered for many years. Church buildings were closed down or demolished, pastors were prosecuted, which even led to pastors committing suicide, and there was hearsay that religious doctrines would be revised to match the direction of "Sinicization". From the perspective of men, China churches have entered a bitter winter!



However, our co-workers have a feeling which somewhat differs.

In the past twelve months, we carried out 22 training programmes for mainland church co-workers with a total of 840 attendances, which are 5 training programmes and 166 attendances fewer compared to 2018. Concerning publications, there were 3 more books published than in 2018, and a total of 5 new books in simplified Chinese characters were published. Thanks to the Lord's grace, through various ways we have supported 56 mainland seminaries located in 23 provinces with a total of 5,000 graduates in the year. Each graduate was provided with a pastoral pack (consisting of 20 Christian books). The total book gifting volume exceeded 100,000 books.

Furthermore, we have increased our participation of workplace ministry through the "Business as Mission" model.

Many ask: How can it be achieved? Well, the Lord has blessed CCL in earlier years and driven us to change: to establish relationships with various mainland parties, encouraging

and authorizing them to conduct bigger and better services. In addition, through the “mentor-mentee relation”, we also foster local leaders, who may continue all the works as and when co-workers from outside cannot do so. In addition, we began to explore the “Business as Mission” model as early as 2014 and created new service platforms. Indeed, the Lord’s guidance for us to give up the old ministry approach back then was to prepare us for today’s challenges.

While some doors of ministry gradually close, this signals that God is opening new ones, for the ancient Gospel needs new methods to convey. Mainland co-workers always remind us that during the Cultural Revolution, there appeared to be no Christian activities in the entire country, but it became the most important period of spiritual formation. The 80s witnessed the first church booming peak. From 1949 to 1982, the number of believers increased from one million to three million. This period of history, and from what we saw and experienced, tells us that the Lord has never ceased His work in China.

We are not to overlook the difficulties in front of us, but we cannot neglect that the Lord is acting all along. Whether today the China churches are passing through a bitter winter, or in the course of late autumn, it will be revealed in time. Nevertheless, when ministries used to be effective have to be halted, it may be another chance for us to re-orientate ourselves.

We hope that this annual report, on reviewing the Lord’s grace, will encourage ourselves to place our faith in the Lord, and not on the constraints of the environment.



## Ministry Summary

CCL has in the last 47 years organized training and supplied resources under our China Church Ministry to sustain mainland churches’ development and leaders’ grooming. In 2019, training programmes and exchanges were conducted in the central southern, eastern, southwestern, and northern regions of China as well as Hong Kong. We have equipped one team coach, nurtured 520 shepherd leaders and supported 364 disciple makers. In spite of the diminishing chances for our services, we still strive to move forward with faith and aim at training up more pastors and leaders to uphold the churches.

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## Sharing the Same Goal & Walking the Rugged Path Together

© Thomas Tang  
General Secretary

The surroundings may remain unchanged, but we meet new faces of graduates-to-be each time we revisit a seminary. CCL in the last two years has given out on average 5,000 sets of books to these graduates. The project in 2019 might not have had to go through too many thorny hurdles, but it was still a rugged way and we made it through with the grace of the Lord.



Since the implementation of the newly revised Regulations on Religious Affairs in early 2018, coupled with the reforms in the terms of reference of the party and government bureaus, policies on publication approval were further tightened. The impact gradually surfaced during late 2018 to early 2019. At that time, our books “Integral Pre-marital Counseling” and “Let the Gospels Preach the Gospel” were in the approval stage. A prolonged delay could not be avoided even though we had originally already planned for a rather long approval window. Our mainland editor responsible for the work liaised with the relevant department many times to pursue the matter, and we also put it in our earnest prayers. Thanks to the Lord, publishing was permitted at last! And in order to meet the needs of 5,000 graduates, a large number of books were required to be reprinted. Under the new regulations, application through the department took longer than before, and involved a lot of follow-up communication. Thus, we cherished each and every book that was printed.

In parallel with the unrelenting efforts of the mainland publishing team, each seminary also understood the tight timing of production and made close coordination with us to ensure books were delivered on time before graduates departed from the school. In one seminary, as books were dispatched from the factory by the logistic porters, they were instantly brought into the classroom and issued to the students without any delay. Indeed, the book delivery process ran into many emergency situations, but the Lord’s guidance was never lacking.

In 2019, 56 seminaries received our books, a record high so far, and they spanned across a very wide area in China. In some remote cities, strict requirements were imposed on logistics services to prevent illegal acts. On one occasion in a town near the border, when the porter delivered the cargo to the local collection point, the officials opened the boxes,

noticing that there were religious publications inside, required from us an additional approval document despite there being a clear statement on the book cover and inside that they were legitimate publications. We had never encountered this situation before, and the matter was sorted out after many negotiations before the books finally arrived at the students' hands.

From approval, editing, printing and production to delivery, there really were diverse difficulties. We thank the Lord for enabling us to trust and be patient, and giving us good publishing companions and support from seminaries and delivery companies. We shared the same goal and strived ahead together through the rugged path.



The new batch of graduates for the moment are affected by the recent coronavirus pandemic, but students told me they have not stopped learning though classes are suspended. They carry on with their Bible studies and sharing on the Internet. In response, we are working unceasingly to get the 5,000 pastoral packs ready prior to their graduation. We are attentive to all details and supplicating for the seminary graduates called by the Lord to serve. We are to bring the valuable resources to them by our own hands.

**Please support the 2020 Mainland Seminary Graduates Book Gifting Project:**

Fund required: USD 320,512

Books gifted: 5,000 pastoral packs  
(content: over 20 printed and electronic books)



# Equipment on Living Road

© Eli

China Church Ministry Frontline Worker

Though most regions had turned cold, we remained steadfast in our commitment. Thanks to our heavenly Father's blessing and guidance, we managed to offer training in the mainland based on The Living Word Curriculum Series through a group of mainland young instructors. People from outside China were hardly allowed to do similar ministry. We were able to nurture future church leaders at training centres and Bible schools in various regions, helping trainees be rooted in the Scripture, have a proper understanding of the Bible and apply it in their daily lives.



Reflecting and responding in class

Unlike the past Living Word Leadership Training which was held at church, in 2019 we had a chance to carry it out at a Bible School. The group of young seminary students were used to a didactic, one-way mode of learning, with teachers doing most of the talking while they took extensive notes. Such spoon-feeding approach was boring. The instructors of the Living Word broke with tradition and taught in a lively way in small groups instead. This way the seminary students developed enhanced understanding of the Bible in a cosy small group environment. They also learned to combine theory with practice, had lively discussions with one another, asking and answering questions, reflecting on their attitudes and values. They applied what they had learned in their real lives, and actively witnessed for the Lord, sharing the Gospel with others in response to God's calling.

The young instructors were constantly reminded of their mission by the students' passion for learning about the Bible. They have devoted themselves to the training, advocating skills for leading small groups besides that for Bible study. At the same time, to expand our team of instructors, we will select from among the students those who are driven and willing to join the Living Word teaching team.

In 2020, the young mainland instructors will continue to travel to different regions to equip Christian leaders with the Living Word, and help churches provide pastoral care through small groups. We hope to build a mature, strong team of Living Word instructors who can brace various challenges in a difficult environment! We will also consider extending the Living Word training online.



**Please support 2020 Leadership Development Ministry**

Fund required: USD 179,500

Training objective: Equip 80 team coaches through 28 times of learning and exchanges in the mainland and Hong Kong, who will then nurture 140 shepherd leaders, support 410 disciple makers.

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**Christian Education**

**Embracing Challenges head on!**

☉ **Sunshine**  
China Church Ministry Frontline Worker

2019 was a challenging year for Christian Education programmes in the mainland. In many places children were strictly forbidden from entering churches, resulting in slow development of and even a halt to children’s ministry. It was difficult to implement training ministry since in some areas, workers from overseas and even from other provinces were not allowed to stand on the pulpit.

It was very difficult to provide practicum for graduates of the Professional Diploma in Christian Education course in 2018. Some arrangements made earlier were cancelled in the end due to strict official control. It is an even greater pity that some pastoral staff did not attach importance to systematic children’s ministry, nor Christian Education at home.

In August 2019, a student in central southern area launched parents’ training in southwestern China at the invitation of a classmate there. An instructor and I also went along to offer supervision. Why did the student from central southern area took the risk to offer training in a different province? Because parents’ Christian Education was banned in her area. She wanted to try when the door was still open in the southwest. We are so moved by her heart to serve!



Course instructor was supervising student

In October I met in Hong Kong with a graduate, and asked her: "Why do you insist and are unafraid of nurturing children's spiritual values?" She replied firmly: "No need to fear! I only know that I should do my utmost for what God asks me to do." 2020 is the year for Christian Education in China to find a way out in the midst of a bitter winter.

May God show us His grace and guidance!

~ THE END ~

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## **Pray for China**

Published since 1974

~ Pray for China publications can be served as a platform to express the latest situations and needs of churches and leaders in the mainland.

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