

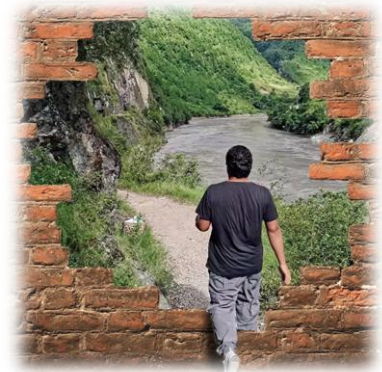
China Church Ministry Working Report 2020 -- Summary

Pressing Ahead Despite the Pandemic – Ministry under the New Normal

Changing Our Strategies But Not Our Focus: Grooming Leaders Under the New Normal

© Otto Lui
Associate General Secretary (Training)

A co-worker from a missionary organization asked me: you have not been able to go north for close to a year, have all your China church ministries come to a halt? When I answered in the negative, the questioner was very surprised. It is by God's grace that our ministries can continue despite the present circumstances. God led us in adjusting our strategies and methods. While we are shifting our strategies all the time, the focus of our mission remains the same. Our changing strategies are set out as follows.



1. Walking hand-in-hand with our partners: unlike most other organizations, CCL sees the China church and church workers as our partners and not merely as service recipients. Yes, we have brought to them publication resources, living subsidies, leadership development programs, training on Bible studies and small group leaders. Yet, we talk to them, pray for each other and work hand-in-hand all the time. Their suggestions have often made us change our strategies to better meet their needs.
2. Serving as coaches: I recall that a lot of young faces showed up in leadership courses in the mainland ten years ago. While it was common for seminary students in Hong Kong to be in their 40s, many of their counterparts in the mainland were younger than 20 years old. Today, it is this group of young people, aged around 30 and newly married, who are steering ministries in the church and the marketplace. While we used to walk alongside them as their coaches, many of these students have now taken up responsibilities independently. We still have regular sharing and prayers together for

further developing our ministries.

3. Leveraging on online platforms: overseas co-workers could understand fully the impact of the pandemic. During the lockdown in the mainland in February and March 2020, partners in Hong Kong promptly adjusted their schedule and conducted intensive online courses on leadership development. Subsequently, the content of various courses were recorded as videos to facilitate training in the mainland. Other overseas partners also chipped in to help, offering ready assistance in terms of the provision of course materials and hardware. Collaboration continued despite the pandemic.
4. Working as a team: without dedicated co-workers, adjusting the strategies would just be empty talk. Online training was not just about changing the format of the course; adjusting the design of the curriculum and teaching methods was also required. Co-workers needed not only acquire knowledge on various videoconferencing software, they also had to teach participants how to use them and ensure security on the internet. Efforts had to be made to constantly upgrade computers, connection speed and hardware. Today, aside from co-workers' offices, their homes have also been turned into online classrooms!

While the year 2020 was tough, viewed from another perspective, it was also a year full of God's grace! God had called us a long time ago to see mainland church and co-workers as our partners and nurtured young leaders through mentor-mentee relationships. Through these initiatives, God has prepared us to face our circumstances today. This is no easy path, and our hard efforts might not yield the desired results. Yet, we understand clearly that this is the path destined by God and is therefore filled with God's blessings. We are grateful that you have walked with us throughout this journey!



Summing Up Our Ministries

Over the past 48 years, CCL's China Church Ministry has supported the development and leadership training of the China church through teaching and providing resources. In 2020, in light of the social turmoil and severe pandemic in Hong Kong, we adjusted how we entered the mainland and received mainland church leaders coming to Hong Kong. Thanks to God's grace, we worked as a team to swiftly transform our ministries and training activities. We have served 1,689 people in our training programs. In addition, our regular online training activities and mentor-mentee shepherding ministries have turned out 9 life mentors, equipped 62 team coaches, nurtured 114 shepherd leaders and supported 72 disciple makers.

A Year of Unique Book Gifting Experience

© Thomas Tang
General Secretary

In the past, the focus of our Mainland Seminary Graduates Book Gifting Project has always been on the books, in aspects such as their types, quantities and ways of delivery. However, this year, whether students could “graduate” became the center of attention.

Difficulties in “Graduating”

At the height of the pandemic, people were not permitted to go outside. The closure of the school campus meant that the spring semester was deferred. Online teaching was conducted later but different regions differed in their implementation pace. As a result, it was uncertain whether graduation could take place in early summer as usually scheduled. However, the relevant documentation, publication, logistics and e-books downloading related to the Book Gifting project must be arranged in advance. Not knowing when students would graduate, the Book Gifting team felt to be at a loss.

Book Gifting: Just In Time

From the beginning of the year to April and May, we were able to keep liaison with seminaries in different regions to convey our regards and prayers. Towards the end of May, we began receiving news about preliminary graduation dates. We believed that this was under God’s good plan and timetable, and expedited the arrangements for Book Gifting. In early June, unprecedented flooding happened along the Yangtze River in southern China, and damage to the roads made it more difficult to deliver our books. The resurgence of the pandemic and destruction caused by the flooding caused serious problems for book delivery. But God’s grace was always sufficient. Publication units, large and small warehouses and many logistics operators in different regions were willing to help out; this sped up the delivery process. A journey which usually took three days was completed in one and half days, and books arrived just before graduates were about to return to their hometowns. Arrangements for the Book Gifting project lasted eight months. By the end of 2020, 2,483 book packs were given to 39 seminaries and Bible schools. Glory be to the Lord!



The Beauty of Sharing

In face of an uncertain future and rapidly changing environment, it is understandable that people would just reserve their resources for future use. To the intercessors and those who have been moved by God to make contributions to the Book Gifting project, your participation is most gracious! When graduates receive the books, they always thank us with a grateful heart, even though we may not be there to give them the books personally. Looking to 2021, students graduating are still studying under the pandemic, and would be subject to even greater impact by the pandemic when compared to the 2020 graduates.

Sharing from graduates in 2020:

“The pandemic brought challenges to the church in terms of funding. We are grateful to CCL for continuing to show care towards theology education and support graduates.”

“Thank you for your books as gifts upon our graduation. What we receive is not only the books, but your deep love and concern for us. May God bless your ministry and remember the contributions of brothers and sisters. These books would be very helpful to graduates as they start their service in the church!”

Please remember these novice pastors in your prayers!

Please support the Mainland Seminary Graduates Book Gifting Project 2021:

Funds needed: USD 307,693

Quantity of books to be gifted: 4,000 pastoral packs (given to 4,000 graduates in 50 seminaries, Bible schools and training centers. Each graduate will receive a pastoral pack containing around 20 books and materials on a mini personal learning platform. The total quantity of books gifted will be 80,000.)

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## The Living Word Classes made Versatile

© Eli  
China Church Ministry Frontline Worker

The pandemic began its toll in early 2020 resulting in urban living coming to a standstill; shepherding and congregation gatherings of mainland churches were inevitably severely affected. Despite halting face-to-face gatherings, some pastors made certain astute and prompt adaptive moves to conduct church worships, small group bible studies, etc. through virtual means. The recorded sermon clips were sent to individual members in case they could not participate in online events. Although the external environment keeps challenging us with obstacles of different magnitudes, over the past years, we have managed to train up a group of young Bible instructors. While the pandemic is alleviating in the mainland, these instructors render timely support to church leaders by giving them the much-needed Biblical teaching.

After having conducted online classes for two semesters, a bible school in the northern region finally resumed face-to-face teaching last November. This school has the tradition of delivering a course on the Pauline epistles every year. In 2020, they convened a class to study the book of Acts to help students gain a better understanding of apostle Paul's ministry and how the early churches were established. The mainland Bible instructors utilized the "Living Word" materials to facilitate the teaching. The students found the resources very precious. Though the outside temperature once dropped to  $-8^{\circ}\text{C}$ , the most frigid day this winter thus far, nothing could divert the students' fervent desire for knowing God's words.

Moreover, we had the opportunity to accommodate to the teaching needs of the Bible training centre in the eastern region by having our mainland instructors conduct a course there on the Proverbs. Students at the training centre learn Biblical books one by one in each semester. The "Living Word" framework is used as a foundation upon which the mainland instructors teach students how to structure Bible study, discussion and application in small group settings. Upon



completion and return to their respective churches, they can then train small group leaders within their home churches. After receiving training, the small group leaders in turn can use the "Living Word" curriculum to help fellow Christians understand and apply what they learn from the bible. By having the pastor on the primary axis, this model of teaching and learning spins off stepwise from the pastor to group leaders, and then from the group leaders to

group members. It expands geometrically as it goes from one tier to the next. Ultimately more and more believers can receive systematic biblical teaching and be built up on a solid foundation.

## Please support Leadership Development Ministry 2021

Required Fund: USD 115,385

Development objective: 104 sessions of online or in-personal training are planned to provide support to 730 leaders, of which 461 of them are disciple makers, 168 are shepherd leaders, 76 are team coaches and 25 are life mentors. It is hoped that the training can strengthen their calling and determination to serve.

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### Support for Evangelists

## Ministry that Overcomes Mountains

© Xiaodong  
China Church Ministry Frontline Worker

*“The pandemic has irrevocably changed people’s lifestyles and consumption patterns, bringing unprecedented challenges to churches. In rural churches with mostly elderly congregations, they face the additional difficulty that the elderly are not used to meeting online. We need to patiently show them how to do it,”* shared Preacher Zhu in the central south region.

Undeterred by difficulties, preacher Zhu said: *“We are facing two major mountains: online and offline. We can only achieve great results by combining the two. Sharing online allows the entire family to hear Biblical teachings whereas physical gatherings cause believers to look at their lives truthfully in pursuit of spiritual growth. In our church, a believer who has followed Christ for more than 20 years was in dispute with every preacher, but during the pandemic, all the preachers she didn’t like before visited her, and shared God’s Word with her, on top of online worship. She was moved, and apologized to all of them. She realized that she had put blame on others before. Seeing her mother’s change, her daughter decided to accept Christ!”* Valuing each believer, Preacher Zhu and his team saved her with God’s love.



Extending personal care and concern to believers during visits

Church meetings were stopped by the pandemic, yet pastoral workers' love for their sheep remained. Believers' lives also continued to be changed by the Lord. Like preacher Zhu, a group of pastors have tried hard to adjust to ministering amid the difficulties under the new normal, guiding brothers and sisters to develop a close relationship with God through online and offline ministries.

Let's conclude with preacher Zhu's words: *"It's all God's grace that as the pandemic eases, we can gather together to worship God in His temple, serve each other again! Going forward, may we in Jesus Christ "be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. (Romans 12:12) Amen!"*

Footnote: Preacher Zhu has since September 2019 been receiving our Living Subsidy for Mainland Evangelists.

### **Please Support the Living Subsidy for Mainland Evangelists 2021**

Required Fund: USD 115,385

Project supported: In 2021 CCL will support 30 preachers from southwest, northwest and eastern and central south regions, provide them with living subsidy and pastoral support according to their actual needs and the living cost in their regions.

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Nurturing Parent-child Relationship

Rebuilding Family Relationships in the Face of Adversity

© Sister Sunshine
China Church Ministry Frontline Worker

During the pandemic, people were spending more time at home. This, however, could make marriage relationships more tense. Children who were studying at home could also create chaos for parents. Various conflicts might arise that worsen parent-child relationships. While noticing the needs, our instructors immediately decided to utilize online teaching to support mainland churches and parents. Online courses were conducted to

assist pastors and parents to make self-adjustments and maintain desirable parent-child relationship amid the pandemic.

In early 2020, Reverend Lan's wife enrolled in an online course to learn how to counsel teenagers to improve their psychological and emotional well-being. Soon after the course ended, she came across a high school student who was emotionally disturbed because the pandemic had negatively affected her mood. Mrs. Lan applied the techniques she acquired in the course and helped this student give up the suicidal thought.



Mrs. Lan is studying psychology and counselling skills attentively.

Minister Yan and her husband had the freedom of courtship and dating when they were young. They were married five years ago. Yet they have had frequent conflicts and her husband has made multiple requests for divorce. After having gone through the online marriage and family study course, minister Yan realized that her husband was influenced by the values of his family of origin. Minister Yan also gained more in-depth understanding of the inherent differences between man and woman in terms of their character, family roles as well as the way they respond to and handle different situations. Since then, minister Yan has become more capable of managing her marital relationship. By the grace of God, her relationship with her husband is gradually improving.

~ THE END ~

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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