

## **Your Needs are Always in My Heart**

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Member of Book Gifting Team



### **Pray for the situation of graduates**

Seminary graduates in China are facing unprecedented challenges and pressure in their pastoral service. There is overwhelming grief, sickness, need for hospice care and counseling, anxiety and suspicion of "being COVID positive", and so on among their sheep.

After lifting most of the infection control measures, almost all of the graduates and their families who are the author's acquaintances in China were once infected. Some of the graduates shared, *"There are individuals in my congregation whose family members' condition suddenly became critical after contracting the virus, some of them even passed away unexpectedly. As a preacher, seeing the distressed family members cry so much makes me terribly sad, I don't know what to say or what Scriptures to use to comfort them."* Other graduates shared, *"Some believers are in a state of panic and fear; they constantly suspect themselves of having contracted the infection whenever they have minor symptoms and despite having already tested negative by PCR."*

Many graduates are young and relatively inexperienced in facing critical life issues. How should they talk about life and death with those in grief? How should they support and comfort their distressed sheep? It is vital for the graduates to uphold their own psychological stability and wellbeing. We ask the Lord to be with them individually, grant them not only extra wisdom but also extra strength to help shouldering the burdens in others' lives.

### **Pray for the Seminaries**

Some teachers of seminaries are sent to other provinces to attend courses to learn more about the country. They have to be away for a period of time causing manpower shortage at the institutions and much increased workload for the remaining staff.

Teachers of seminaries in China generally have their own areas of expertise. I am acquainted with a teacher in the Central southern region who has been teaching *Worship* and *Homiletics* for almost 15 years. These subjects are his specialty. During the summer, he was assigned to teach an additional course of *History of the Church in China* after the school year began because another teacher was suddenly summoned to go elsewhere to attend the course for six months. At that time, this teacher had only one textbook about church history in China on hand. He tried to find other materials, but for various reasons, including the implementation of "The Measures on the Administration of Internet Religious Information Services", resources became extremely scarce. The teacher's helplessness at that point can be imagined. Later on, due to the pandemic, the teacher who had gone out to study was unable to return to his post as scheduled. The substitute teacher had no choice but to continue covering his colleague's duty.

Decline in new enrollments is another challenge some seminaries must face. The fact that churches could not remain constantly open in recent years is affecting pastoral care of the faith community. Hardship in daily life also adversely impacts individuals' desire to dedicate themselves for theological education in preparation for subsequent ministry. In the long run, there will be fewer ministers in China and the quality of pastoral care will be negatively affected. In addition, the decline in new enrollments will upset the operation of the seminaries and the allocation of resources. May the Lord have mercy on them and carry them through!

## **Pray for the Book Gifting Team**

The Book Gifting ministry is challenged with increased transportation and storage costs. Compared to the same period in the previous year, there is an increase of nearly 30%. Adding to the already heavy financial pressure, progress in raising the required funds continues to lag behind.

At the beginning of last year, most parts of China were closed due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, the Book Gifting team made preparations to have book packages ready to be shipped whenever they were informed by a school that it would hold an immediate graduation ceremony. Yet delivery became a major obstacle. We are thankful that our logistics partner helped us explore all possible solutions. They even collaborated with other service providers to overcome the logistics issues. As it was in the midst of the dire pandemic, infection risks were high, so extra charges were imposed for their services. Moreover, major highways were closed at that time, and the routes involved more detours and farther travel distances. As some schools are located in areas that were completely sealed off, we were requested to deliver the books directly to each graduate's workplace. Such special arrangement resulted in much higher transportation costs. Some schools are located in very remote areas. Their graduates left the schools soon after the commencement exercises took place. To be able to deliver the book packages to them on time, we even tried posting by air. This year, the infection control measures have been lifted, the pace of domestic recovery

now plays a key role in the resumption of normal daily living. We pray that the gracious Lord will continue to guide our Book Gifting ministry this year.

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## Please support the 2023 China Seminary Graduates Book Gifting Project

### Book Gifting Target:

To provide an estimated 60,000 copies of pastoral resources to 4,000 graduates of 50 seminaries, Bible schools and training centres in China. These materials aim at helping the graduates nurture the spiritual wellbeing of believers and churches.



We sincerely invite you to support us by making a donation (Book Gifting budget: USD 410,256). Thank you!

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~The above is part of the content of PFC issue358, if you would like to read the full newsletter, please contact us at [pfc@ccl.org.hk](mailto:pfc@ccl.org.hk), thank you!~

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