

Like Gold in a Furnace – What Evangelists in China Need to Hold Firm

© Sheung Un
Member of Book Gifting Team

Can you imagine how difficult it is for evangelists in China to get by every day after they have decided to respond to the divine call for full-time ministry? They struggle to find shepherding resources and they struggle to meet the basic living needs of their families. Are you able to feel the ruggedness of their path?

A firm grip on God's promises to counter hardships in life

One of the strong impacts of the pandemic on churches in China is a significant decline in donations, especially for churches in rural areas. Evangelists' wages were very low to begin with, and now the gap between their income and that of workers is even more substantial, so much so that theological schools are facing an unavoidable drop in their enrollment of new students. Take for example a young man in his 20's or 30's with junior high school education or higher. If he works in the city, he can earn an average of at least RMB5,000 per month. But if he chooses to be an evangelist or Christian worker, what he earns is barely sufficient to make his own ends meet, not to mention to support his family. Ministers in China, especially those who serve in the ethnic minority areas, have to have very strong faith in God and a relentless determination to continue living out their divine calling.



Evangelists who serve in ethnic minority areas often face hardship in making ends meet. May God strengthen their hearts and supply what they and their family need each day.

A firm support to counter the weight of the burden

For those individuals called to go into full time ministry, although they are very determined in the beginning, they still need the support of their families. A teacher at a school in the South-Central region said, "*This year there are six students who want to withdraw because*

they used to be the breadwinners of their families and their theology education is putting great pressure on the respective families." This teacher tried to get some help for these students, and the school also waived some expenses so as to make it more affordable for the students' families to continue supporting their children's theological training. The author knows of an evangelist in the Southwest region who is in his 30s and has been serving faithfully. His wife is also a theology graduate. She is willing to stay home to take care of the children. In the author's eyes, both of them are serving, with the husband on the frontline and the wife giving him full support at the back. Life is tough and the burden is always heavy, yet the husband and wife are one in their hearts in propagating the Kingdom of God, the way they complement each other is a beautiful testimony in and of itself!



Some graduates used to be their families' breadwinners. The support of their own families is very important for them to be able to complete their theology training.

A firm hope to counter the loss of courage to serve

Even though the path is rough, the Heavenly Father always looks after those who commit themselves to serve Him. Being a member of the Book Gifting team, the author witnessed how Christ's devoted and unswerving servants counted on Him every step of the way in the past years. When a theology student in the Northwest region was thinking of quitting, his teacher talked to him, and they reviewed together how God initially called him to ministry. In that process, the student's faith and determination to press on was re-established. An evangelist in South-Central region also wanted to quit serving after graduation, but when he read the book "The Call to Joy and Pain" (an item included in the book gifting package), he was deeply touched by the author's dedication and regained courage to resume his ministry.

Not only is the author impressed by the perseverance of Christ's servants, but I also see hope for the future! I once met a 7- or 8-year-old boy during a visit to the Southwest region. The team members asked the boy, "*What do you want to do in the future?*" He replied firmly and confidently, "*I want to be an evangelist, I want to be a servant of God.*" Everyone who heard what he said was deeply touched. The pure and determined gaze in his eyes tells us that being God's steward is his dream and something that gives him great pride to pursue! We were curious and asked him why he had such a desire. He said he saw the pastor in his village visiting and helping the villagers in need unreservedly every day, the desire to become an evangelist was planted and had been budding in his heart.

"Are you able to hold on to your call?" Ministers in China constantly face critical situations that challenge their answer to this question. Yet every time they renew their determination, their faith is taken to a new height. For those who desire to become evangelists, will their aspiration continue to emerge and grow strong? Are they able to overcome the daily challenges while serving? If you care about the churches in China, these ministers earnestly need your prayer support.

*“Lord, as is Your calling,
All of me I'm giving;
Like a seed I'm falling,
For Your glory living!”¹*

¹ Excerpted from the hymn 《一粒麥子》, lyrics and music: 林婉容, copyright: 小羊詩歌。

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

Graduates entering full-time ministry are commencing a new phase of training and they need shepherding resources to help them build up the spiritual wellbeing of the church and of the believers. You are sincerely invited to be their companion along this path!

Book Gifting Project: To provide an estimated 60,000 copies of pastoral resources to 4,000 students of 50 seminaries, bible schools and training centres in China who will graduate in 2023.

May our Heavenly Father let you see our needs (USD 410,256) and motivate you to respond. Thank you!

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~The above is part of the content of PFC issue360, 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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