

Embracing Challenges, Staying Committed, and Pressing Ahead with Flexibility

- © Dialogue of the Leading Team:
Thomas Tang, General Secretary
Matthew Fung, Associate General Secretary (Publishing) &
Otto Lui, Associate General Secretary (Training)

Compiled by: Yin Qing



At various occasions, we often hear the saying: *“there are always more solutions than problems!”* In 2021, the China ministry team really experienced for themselves that *“there were always more solutions than problems under God’s faithful hand!”*

God has provided abundantly for CCL, which has been blessed with many partners in China, including pastors, teachers in seminaries, teachers of the “Living Word” Biblical teaching, publishers, logistics providers and marketplace leaders, etc. We have fostered cordial and long-standing relationship with our partners who work with us closely in our ministries. Even though we could not go to China during the pandemic in 2021, our team accomplished some arduous tasks. It is thanks to God’s grace, valuable assistance from our partners as well as prayers and support from those who walk with us in our journey. We thank the Lord for using our team!

Embracing Grave Challenges, Remaining Dedicated to Our Mission

To our ministry, 2021 is a year of enormous difficulties and challenges. In face of all the hardship, we chose to look up to God’s grace and to embrace the challenges, staying dedicated to the mission bestowed upon us by our Heavenly Father, which is to equip leaders through training and publications. We quickly adopted a hybrid online/face-to-face teaching mode and restructured our China ministry in order to stay flexible and effective.

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.” (Psalm 28:7)

God’s gracious hand has led our team in continuing with our ministries in China. Let us take stock of our work in the past year with a grateful heart.

1. **Nurturing leaders through book-gifting for ten years** – thanks to God’s faithful guidance, 2021 marks the 10th anniversary of the “Mainland Seminary Graduates Book Gifting Project” which was first rolled out in 2012. Over the past decade, we have served over 31,000 leaders and distributed 657,000 pastoral literature in provinces and cities all over the country. Through such publications, we have helped equip those called upon by the Lord to serve Him.



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2. **Passing on the “Living Word” and teaching the Bible** - Our Heavenly Father pays special attention to the need for Bible-teaching in China church. As of 2021, the “Living Word Curriculum Series” has served China churches for 15 years. A total of 26 titles have written, covering systematic teaching on 64 books in the Old and New Testaments, with 140,000 volumes of the “Living Word” were distributed to most provinces and cities. Over the years, the “Living Word”, marked by its accurate exegesis, student-based flexible teaching and advice on how to apply Biblical teachings to daily life, has helped lay a solid foundation for church leaders and believers in their pursuit of Biblical knowledge and practice of the Word.



Small group meeting among brothers concentrating on studying the “Living Word”.

3. **Combining online and offline resources** – in 2021, teachers and our ministry team have adapted to serving under the new norm. Team members strived to better grasp the latest technologies, while equipment has been upgraded with donation from supporters. The team can now flexibly use online and offline teaching modes to target the specific needs of the China church and offer suitable training to leaders. The programs staged include: the annual “Leadership Online Forum 2021 – Adaptive Learning”, an online learning platform for pastors and believer leaders in the workplace: “ZD Learning Community, and an



“ZD Learning Community” provides online learning resources.

online parent education seminar: “Learning About Life 360”, etc.

4. **Seizing opportunities and pressing on with our work** – in 2021, the teaching team was invited to organize the “Knowing About the China Church and China Ministries” program in Hong Kong, sharing knowledge about the China church with over 10 Hong Kong churches, enabling them to serve flexibly, bear witness to the Lord and shepherd believers.



Dr Otto Lui discussing the religious policies in China and prospects for Hong Kong churches in serving in China.

Forging Ahead with Flexibility Amid Changes

Stepping into 2022, our top priority is to consider how to continue and expand our China ministries amidst all the changes we face. The changing external environment caused by the pandemic and religious regulations may hinder our ministries. Therefore, our goal over the years has been to groom local leaders in the China church to enable them to conduct training and pastoring themselves to minimize the impact brought about by the changing environment. Meanwhile, we will continue to leverage on and work together with our network of partners in our ministries on publication and grooming leaders.

The team’s motto is to “*press on with flexibility*”, meaning that we will not be constrained by our existing ministry mode. Since the second half of 2021, we have proactively identified new ministry opportunities. For instance, we have invited book authors to make short videos for seminary graduates, launched the “LW ePlatform”, and organized the “Business Leadership Certificate Program”. The aim is to provide all-round training to leaders and believers and reach out to people of different backgrounds through multiple online and offline channels. We will seize every opportunity to nurture leaders and groom next-generation leaders in the family, the church and the marketplace.

Outlook for Our Ministries in 2022 – Continuing and Expanding Our Ministries in the China Church Amidst Changes

1. “**Mainland Seminary Graduates Book Gifting Project**” – If the Lord permits, we plan to give away more than 70,000 pastoral literature to 4,000 graduates from 50 seminaries, Bible schools and training centres and produce three short videos introducing our publications. The aim is to strengthen believers’ spiritual life and promote the healthy growth of the church.
2. **Publishing in China** – although it is increasingly difficult to publish and reprint publications in China, we pray for God’s grace so that we can publish at least one type of new

devotional literature and reprint 12 book titles there. We aspire to continue providing quality publication resources to serve believers in China.

3. **“The Living Word Curriculum Series”** – we pray for two new titles of Biblical teaching materials, each with a teacher’s and a student’s version, to be published this year, taking the total number to 26 covering 64 books in the Old and New Testaments. We pray that the Lord will use these materials to help the China church under the new norm. Please remember the work of the editorial team in compiling the two new titles in your prayers.
4. **Support for evangelists** – we will visit evangelists who are now receiving our living subsidy to better understand their needs. On the other hand, through exchanges with them, we hope to grasp the situation of believers after the pandemic and how they cope with the latest pressure in the society. We would show our great concern for them and offer advice on shepherding their flocks.
5. **Parent education** – parents should bear the responsibility of setting up family altars. Parents in China have pressing needs, and the teaching team will make the best use of the online parent education course “Learning About Life 360” to help parents learn about themselves and grow, as well as foster the relationship between the couples and parent-child relationship. We also aim to equip parents to be their children’s spiritual mentors.
6. **Marketplace Leaders** – through the “ZD Learning ePlatform”, we will provide leadership training and courses on financial management, parenting and other subjects via videos and share testimonies in order to impart positive values on believers and reach out to different strata of the society.
7. **Passing on our vision to respond to the needs of the times** – we will continue to host the “Knowing About the China Church and China Ministries” program as requested by churches in Hong Kong to equip believers and help pastors reposition their partnership with the China church.

Conclusion: One Plus One is Greater than Two

We believe that God takes charge of history. Irrespective of our circumstances, China ministries will continue to flourish and believers will also rise in number. Our service in the past 50 years is evidence that what we do depends totally on God’s grace. No matter how the environment changes and what hurdles we face, we will remain committed to our ministries and look forward to the day when the Lord will come again.

In 2022, a mixed model of online and offline learning will be the mainstay of our ministries. Teachers and our teaching team will do our utmost to achieve a result of “one plus one is greater than two” in our service! We will endeavor to provide all-round training programs, make the best use of resources, conduct training, equip and care for frontline workers and promote the self-learning online platform. Through such mixed online-offline model, we hope

to groom the next-generation leaders wielding spiritual influence in the family, the church and the marketplace. When China church workers and leaders have been nurtured, they can then apply what they have learned in teaching and pastoring, achieving even greater results in their ministry!

We will seize every opportunity to nurture leaders and cherish those who walk with us in this journey and those who pray for us and support us with their donation. We will use our resources most prudently and carry out our God-given mission prudently and nurture leaders who walk in God's will! We hope you can pray for us and make offerings in support of our work in nurturing leaders and publishing the much-needed resources! Our offerings have been affected in view of the pandemic, and please remember our financial needs in your prayers! God has bountiful grace and there are always more solutions than difficulties. The saying that *"we will embrace all challenges, stay faithful to our mission, and strive to forge ahead with flexibility in an ever-changing environment"* is not merely a slogan, but rather our testimony to God's grace, incessant provision and continuing guidance. CCL will remain committed to our ministries to serve the China church!

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# Think out of the box, Take a leap of faith —— Book gifting ministry surfing an ever-changing paradigm

© Sheung En  
Book Gifting team member

## Be innovative to adapt to changing norm

For two years in a row, the book gifting team was unable to visit seminaries and have personal interactions with graduates in China because of the pandemic and its resultant closure of the borders. In the era of the “new normal”, the way people live and learn has been increasingly and inadvertently remodeled by a new set of norms. To cope with the change, the book gifting team initiated a new endeavour---video production.



Dr Benjamin W. H. Wat shares tips on how to use the book “Love as We First Met” effectively.

This supplement has the objective of enhancing the adaptation and utilization of resources given to the graduates. We invited two book authors and an experienced pastor to film the videos. They spoke on three book gifting items, namely, “Love as We First Met”, “Integral Premarital Counseling” and “Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ”. In the videos, the speakers highlight the key characteristics of the written texts and share real life shepherding tips with audiences. Most importantly, the authors and pastor give their blessings and encouragements to the young evangelists.

## Be flexible when introducing changes

To China seminaries, the virtual media is a brand-new way of information sharing. The book gifting team must obtain prior approval from the teachers before sharing any materials to the graduates. An initial “zero feedback” from the teachers was a setback to the production team. To promote using the electronic and physical materials together and thereby achieve their potential synergistic effects, the team initially wished the sending of the videos could coincide with the arrival of the physical book sets. However, the team also understands very well that one must be very patient in handling all matters in China. Pushing something too

hard or too fast will only trigger the contrary response. Thus, the team resorted to watchful and peaceful waiting. After a few months, the team sent another round of messages related to the videos to the seminary teachers. We thank the Lord that this time we received a continuous inflow of positive responses.



The book gifting pastoral packages were sent to graduates first which is subsequently followed by the videos.

## Blessings emerged when time is ripe

After watching the videos, a teacher from a remote area shared, *“In the past, I was only able to derive applications based on my own interpretation of a certain book’s contents and references. Now through watching the video, I get to know how the author wants his audience to use the book and his hands-on tips on real life applications of the written materials. It is very precious to the users (the evangelists) as we can then more accurately grasp the author’s intent and thereby appropriately apply its contents. It also greatly facilitates the design of course materials for group counselling.”* As this seminary is situated in a very remote area, it is inconvenient to receive the visit of the book gifting team in the past. The new endeavour overcomes the geographic barriers enabling blessings to reach the graduates there.

A teacher of a training centre in the central northern region shared, *“Although students of the training centre have graduated, online learning immediately ensues. I am now leading them to study the book ‘Love as We First Met’. The video aroused in them a great enthusiasm to study the book together. The video introduction was a great stimulus. Thanks for your thoughtfulness!”* It is beyond our expectations that a video clip which lasts for only a few minutes can trigger the eagerness of a group of graduates to form an online study group. In China, it is difficult for evangelists to talk about their own marriage. The sharing of the video provides the graduates the opportunity to reflect upon their marital relationship, share how they get along with their own spouse, remind and encourage each other in the group. We give thanks to the Lord for them!

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**Please support  
the “Mainland Seminary Graduates Book Gifting Project” in 2022**

Fund needed: USD 307,692

Project details: More than 70,000 copies of publications will be distributed to 50 seminaries, Bible schools and training centres in China with a total of 4,000 graduates. Video clips highlighting the key contents of three selected books will be produced. The overall objective is to help recipients provide pastoral care and nurture to individual believers as well as build up the spiritual well-being of the entire church congregation.

Please pray for the Book Gifting ministry and support us, thank you!





# Prayers

## 1. Equipping under-resourced pastors and leaders

In recent years, changing external factors such as the pandemic, religious environment etc. have posed challenges to the development and continuation of church ministries. Some pastors and lay leaders lacking theological and church management background, lack support networks as well as the ability and strategy to respond. But under the “new normal”, quite a number of Biblical and leadership training courses have been moved online, providing new opportunities for church leaders to be equipped through a convenient channel.



May the Lord give lead pastors and lay leaders access to courses and literature materials that can help them develop ministries, cope with changes and serve people from all walks of life.

## 2. Using festivals to illustrate Biblical teachings



The congregations of churches in remote regions in China mostly grew up in villages, and are not used to new ideas. Coupled with their limited educational level, it is not easy for them to understand the different contexts in the Bible, not to mention living out the faith. But far from being discouraged, their preachers teach by using examples of different festivals and occasions. A preacher in Southern central shared: *“We cite the example of Thanksgiving Festival to guide believers*

*to think what is Thanksgiving Festival? What can we thank the Heavenly Father for? What pledges or concrete actions can we take in daily lives?”*

May the Lord give preachers wisdom, that they can, based on congregational needs, merge Biblical teachings and daily living in a creative way. May the Lord bless the believers, help them understand and be willing to practice what is in His Word!

## 3. Prepare for gatherings and classes with unstable opening times

Due to the fluctuation in the pandemic, church gatherings and class hours of seminaries are sometimes suspended, giving pastors and teachers additional pressure. Pastors spend double the amount of time and effort preparing for ministries online and offline. A teacher

also shared that for the past 2 years, even when seminaries are open, they have to work overtime to catch up with lost lessons. They also need to prepare for online lessons, doubling their workload.

May the Lord bless pastors and teachers, give them adequate wisdom and strength under the pandemic and help them make proper preparations and flexible adjustments!



#### 4. Look after believers and non-believers under financial pressure



Limited electricity supply and economics activities have posed huge pressure on people in China. With reduced income, factory workers are struggling to support their living and also pay for the expenses in ushering in the Chinese New Year.

May the Lord look after believers and non-believers under financial pressure. May the Lord give wisdom to pastors, help them use Biblical teachings to guide believers to trust in the Lord under whatever circumstances.

~ 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 China.

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*Editor-in- Chief*    Otto Lui

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*Editorial*            Jurita Lui  
                              Eddy Leung

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*Publisher*            Thomas Tang

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*Subscriptions*      pfc@ccl.org.hk

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