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## Membership

We are a membership organisation, and we're delighted to have members from all the main church denominations and from partner organisations in Scotland. Individuals can also become members. There is no cost, but membership ensures you are kept up-to-date with our work and activities. Contact Patricia Johnston if you'd like to know more (details below).

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## A Deaf congregation in Shandong

by Mark McLeister



I have recently finished a project on a Deaf congregation in the city of Yantai (aka 'Chefoo'), in Shandong. Although there are a number of Deaf congregations across the country (most notably in Shanghai and the Northeast of China), Yantai's congregation is especially significant because the first institution for specialist Deaf education was established there in the late nineteenth century by the Presbyterian missionary, Annetta Thompson Mills (1853-1929). Mills' work had such an impact that the school she established became a training hub for Deaf education (and the school even trained missionaries from Korea). Yantai's school for the Deaf flourished throughout the first half of the twentieth century and was then nationalised in 1952. The school continues to specialise in Deaf education today. From its missionary inception to the reform era, the school emphasised an oralist approach to educating the Deaf, meaning that pupils were taught to speak Chinese and sign language was very much outlawed. Oralism went hand-in-hand with the idea that deafness was a 'disease' or an 'abnormality' which needed to be 'fixed.' An oralist approach to teaching Deaf children is now widely regarded as a hindrance to their development and wellbeing. However, the school in Yantai did bring children together which allowed a Deaf network to form which facilitated the spread of the Christian message after an elderly Deaf gentleman ('brother Liu') became a Christian in Yantai in the 1980s.

The Deaf congregation in Yantai has now grown to about 70 people, and it may be one of the largest Deaf congregations in China (although this is difficult to verify since the field is vastly under-studied). The congregation makes use of a digital media projector at its gatherings to display biblical texts, messages, songs, liturgy, and images which facilitate corporate worship. The worship gatherings provide a space for Deaf people to gather. Many members were discouraged from using sign language during their formal education and because many of the members come from different places and backgrounds, there is a wide variety of types of sign language, signed Chinese and informal hand gestures. The Deaf congregation is a community where the members can develop their sign language and their own Deaf identity. The members promote a narrative of sin, and not deafness, as the 'real disability' (zhengzheng de canji). Their narrative regards all people as being spiritually disabled and in need of God's grace to be made whole and liberates Deaf people from the negative discourse that they are 'diseased' and allows them to worship in their own language of sign.

*If you are interested in my lengthier article which examines this congregation, you can download it for free here: <https://www.eupublishing.com/doi/full/10.3366/swc.2019.0258>*

## Heart & Soul 2020



This year's Heart & Soul event, run by the Church of Scotland, takes place on Sunday 17 May. It is held in Princes St Gardens in Edinburgh and the event attracts more than 5000 people each year. If you are coming along, do visit our stall and say hello - we'd be delighted to see you. We will have leaflets and Newsletters, and hope to inform and enthuse people about our continuing work in China. We are also hoping for some sunshine this year!

## China visits

Patricia Johnston's partner visit to China is provisionally rescheduled for November. She plans to go to Shenyang to meet our partners in Shengjing Hospital and the Caritas Social Service Centre, then south to Nanjing to visit partners at The Amity Foundation, and, finally, on to Shanghai to visit the Rende Foundation. Dependent on the situation regarding the coronavirus, and upon funding, Mairi Houldsworth, Dementia Champion, will make her third trip to China to run further training for staff working with people living with dementia.

# Scottish Churches China Group

苏格兰教会中国会



# NEWSLETTER

## Struggle continues in China to combat Coronavirus



Photos copyright The Amity Foundation

Please pray for our friends and partners in China as they struggle with the devastating outbreak of coronavirus. The situation is fast changing, but as we went to press with this Newsletter, the situation was still extremely difficult and worrying. SCCG Advisor, Patricia Johnston, had planned a visit to China in February but it has been postponed until later in the year, if the situation allows.

We have been staying in close touch with partners. The Amity Foundation has been at the forefront of supply and relief efforts. You can follow their updates on the internet and social media. We recently received an email from one of our partners at Shengjing Hospital (China Medical University). They said:

"China's factories are rushing to produce protective equipment, but the consumption is too large, and the supply is still in short. More and more people are going to support Hubei. Maybe I need to go some day and I've already signed up for volunteers. The vice president [of the hospital] has gone to Xiangyang City, Hubei Province, together with 135 medical staff. The administrative, logistics and medical staff will go together to take over the hospital in an all-round way because there are many medical staff infected or need to be isolated in Hubei. At present, Liaoning has sent out a total of 1600 medical personnel to support other cities.

"I often cry, especially when I see off my colleagues and my classmates. I hope they can come back safely and hope we can defeat the virus early."

## Looking ahead with SCEN

by Simon Macaulay



Founded in 2006, the Scotland China Education Network (SCEN) is a registered charity which exists to promote the learning of Chinese and about China in schools in Scotland. It brings together teachers, individuals and national education bodies keen to promote the language and learning about China. It exists as an independent body and works with all agencies involved in the Chinese language. This includes Scottish Government, the Confucius Institute for Scotland's schools and other Confucius Institutes associated with universities in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen; all the main education bodies in Scotland, local councils, individual schools, the Consulate of the People's Republic of China and those sections of the business community in Scotland involved in working with businesses in China.

SCEN is also pleased to be working with other charities involved with China – including the SCCG where a SCEN Trustee is also a Trustee of SCCG.

Throughout the year, SCEN organises events such as Youth Summits which showcase progress being made in schools by pupils who are learning Mandarin. These summits are usually national events with pupils from all parts of Scotland participating. However, we are now looking to run more local events, allowing greater access for pupils and teachers especially in those parts of Scotland where the teaching and learning of Chinese is not so well developed.

SCEN is also seeking to develop youth voices within SCEN. We are now discussing ways of bringing pupils together using a safe and secure media platform where young people themselves can bring forward ideas to allow the voice of Mandarin learners to be heard within SCEN, and how older learners can engage with younger learners about the many benefits of learning Chinese.

SCEN organises a Teachers' Club which brings together teachers of Mandarin throughout Scotland, to discuss teaching resources and methodology as well as to exchange issues and challenges. We also organise lectures from time to time with prominent speakers talking about various aspects of China today and Chinese history.

Our Advisory Council brings together representatives from most of the main national bodies and universities involved in teaching Mandarin. This encourages a full discussion on ways in which the learning and teaching of Mandarin can be better promoted and supported.

SCEN was set up at a time when very few schools in Scotland were teaching Mandarin – where there were few qualified teachers – and no SQA certification in Chinese languages. All that has changed. There are Confucius Hub schools in 24 local authorities. Most independent schools teach Mandarin. The Swire Trust funds schools and teaching posts in a number of schools in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Glasgow. SQA results indicate a year on year rise in the number of students gaining qualifications in Chinese languages. However the majority of Scottish pupils still have little or no access to Mandarin. It is SCEN's role to persuade schools and local authorities of the huge benefits of learning Mandarin – especially as China's role in the world grows ever more important. It is an opportunity which should not be denied our young people.

For more information visit:  
[www.scen.info](http://www.scen.info)

## Kiltwalk 2020!

Our participation in last year's Kiltwalk raised an amazing £2,392 for the Little Sunflowers Project run by the Caritas Social Service Centre in Shenyang in North East China. This supports children with leukaemia and their families.



We will be taking part in Kiltwalk 2020 - could you walk for us? Sir Tom Hunter has pledged that 150% of fundraising will go to each charity. That means if you sign up for the Kiltwalk and raise £100 for the SCCG, we will receive £150. It's an amazing opportunity for a project like the Little Sunflowers.

This year's walks are:

**Glasgow - Sunday 26 April**  
**Aberdeen - Sunday 7 June**  
**Dundee - Sunday 16 August**  
**Edinburgh - Sunday 13 September**

You can register online at [www.thekiltwalk.co.uk](http://www.thekiltwalk.co.uk). When registering, please select 'SCCG' for your chosen charity. Perhaps you could walk with friends or your church group? Please contact Tricia Johnston if you'd like to know more.

We're also grateful for a grant of £1,800 from the Pollock Memorial Missionary Trust for the Little Sunflower Project.

## SCCG Treasurer

On 30 January, our Management Team said goodbye and expressed its thanks to our outgoing Treasurer, Kenny Roy. We're very pleased that Val Nellist will be taking on the role in the interim while we continue to seek a new Treasurer. We will also be engaging an accountancy firm to oversee our bookkeeping in the interim: this is not a preferred use of our funds! If you can help with the role of Treasurer, please get in touch. We have been encouraged recently with new trust support and we want to build on the confidence that others have shown in us.

## Models for caring communities



Towards the end of last year, Father Joseph Zhang, Director of the Caritas Social Service Centre (CSSC) in Liaoning Diocese and staff member Li Zhaohui came to Scotland. They visited residential and day care services for people with dementia, and faith-based organisations who run projects for the most vulnerable in their community.

### Val Nellist reports:

It was a pleasure to meet up again with Father Zhang and to meet Miss Li. My task was to take them to various voluntary sector organisations supporting the elderly, people with dementia and carers. Having been the carer for my elderly parents in recent years these kinds of visits are of great interest to me too. We were welcomed to a Day Care Centre in East Kilbride, the Glasgow City Mission (support for homeless people), a carers support group in Airdrie, a choir for people with dementia in Hamilton and the Salvation Army food and clothing bank in Stirling.

In each place people told us their stories and explained how these support networks make a big difference in improving their lives. There was a real openness to engage with the visitors from China and a sense of privilege on both sides to be sharing experience and understanding. Having 'Dementia Champion' Mairi Houldsworth with us for most of the visits was another plus as

she is known to both Father Zhang, from her recent visit to Shenyang, and to the groups we visited in North Lanarkshire.

North Lanarkshire and Glasgow are not places I am personally very familiar with as a driver, and I was driving a car that I had only recently bought, so there were moments of confusion and some delays! However, our visitors were kind, Father Zhang held my phone so that we could use the satnav app and, as I struggled to escape Glasgow traffic, the carers at Airdrie waited a full half an hour, with refreshments, for us to arrive. Speaking of refreshments, we were very pleased to find very good northern Chinese food in both Stirling and Edinburgh, to the joy of all concerned.

### Father Zhang writes:

On behalf of CSSC, I am very grateful to you and SCCG for support our visit trip and as well as our project. Regarding to our visit, first of all, it was very useful to visit various church-based organisations, especially regarding dementia care and mental disease activities. These two areas are a huge problem in China. How to respond to the needs of elderly and mental issues, I think [Chinese] society is still not ready yet. The church has experience and spiritual legacy.

During our visit, church made community by various activities [for people with] dementia. It is an incurable

disease, but this can slowdown the situation getting worse. Certainly, we gained some experience and learned some models for both caring for people with dementia and mental disease. It will be useful for CSSC to implement such issues while we just start caring for the elderly in the community. We are planning to expand this programme and do some home and hospital visits.

I think trainings, such as Mairi provided, [are very good]. CSSC may not develop a professional agency for caring only dementia, but generally for aged people, including how to reduce the loneliness of aged, how to provide more activities to strengthen the community for the aged.

Regarding the elderly, also how to provide better spiritual care. CSSC staff needs to learn more spiritual care skills and experiences for caring for elderly people and mental disease. CSSC is willing to provide a model for [wider] society rather than doing everything. You may help CSSC to develop a community model for elderly and mental issues.

Once again, many thanks for your support, and hope you can continue to be with us.

