

# China



## Scripture and Literacy

**Project: 71201**  
**Tax Deductible**



# 37.75m

non-literate adults in China

# 90%

of Mandarin speakers who are non-literate or semi-literate are elderly

# 80%

of Mandarin speakers who are non-literate or semi-literate are women

### Overview

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Bible Society Australia is supporting the United Bible Societies China Partnership (UBSCP) in providing literacy classes for rural Chinese Christians, many lack formal education and are unable to read and write. When Christians acquire literacy skills, it boosts their confidence in social interactions, thereby improving their community life. It also empowers them to engage actively in church services and understand God's word for themselves.

### The Need

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According to GlobalData, China's literacy rate reached 99.8% in 2021. With an estimated population of approximately 1.4 billion people in 2021, this translates to about 2.4 million individuals aged 15 and above who were non-literate that year.

Most Christians in rural China lack formal education and are unable to read and write. Many of them are elderly Christians though they deeply desire to read God's word in their final years. The need for literacy classes is significant, especially among these elderly Christians. Improved literacy also helps to address the church's concern over the widespread infiltration of cults, found mainly in rural areas. Biblical literacy will help Christians discern between true and false teachings and prevent believers from being swayed by heresies.

*In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. – Acts 19:20, NIV*

## Goals

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In 2025 UBSCP will continue to collaborate with Provincial Christian Councils (PCCs) to develop and support literacy programs tailored to the needs of Christians in provinces where doors are opened. The goal is to reach a total of about 6,090 Mandarin speakers in about 12 provinces through 203 literacy classes with 30 participants per class. UBSCP also aim to reach 450 Christians from nine ethnic minority groups who have the Bible or New Testament in their language.

The specific goals of the project are to raise the literacy level of these rural Christians and to develop a new literacy primer for the Chinese language literacy booklets to replace the current ones which have become outdated. Since 2023, with input from UBS literacy experts and an external literacy consultant, UBSCP have developed the first two levels of the primer, and plan to develop level three in 2025.

## Impact

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Improved literacy improves quality of life. When they can read and write, people are better informed of developments in their communities, especially matters of benefit to them, and can respond with understanding.

The Scripture literacy program motivates these Christians to learn basic literacy skills, enabling them to better understand the Bible. Ultimately, they come to a deeper understanding of God's love. With improved literacy, spiritual growth can be expected for all believers as they are also better able to understand sermons and Bible teaching.

## Testimony

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*"Through the literacy classes, it is gratifying to witness the believers growing and improving. I am very happy to be able to serve the Lord and do his work ... It is not just about giving free booklets or Bibles; it is about love." — Elder Chen\*, 82-year-old Scripture literacy teacher*

*\*Name changed to protect privacy.*

## Prayer Points

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- Pray for the Provincial Christian Council as they work with the local churches to run the Scripture literacy classes.
- Pray for the participants - that they may be able to learn quickly and well.
- Pray for God's guidance in rolling out the new primer for the Chinese Language, from testing it at selected literacy classes, setting up the assessment system and making the finalised version available in China.