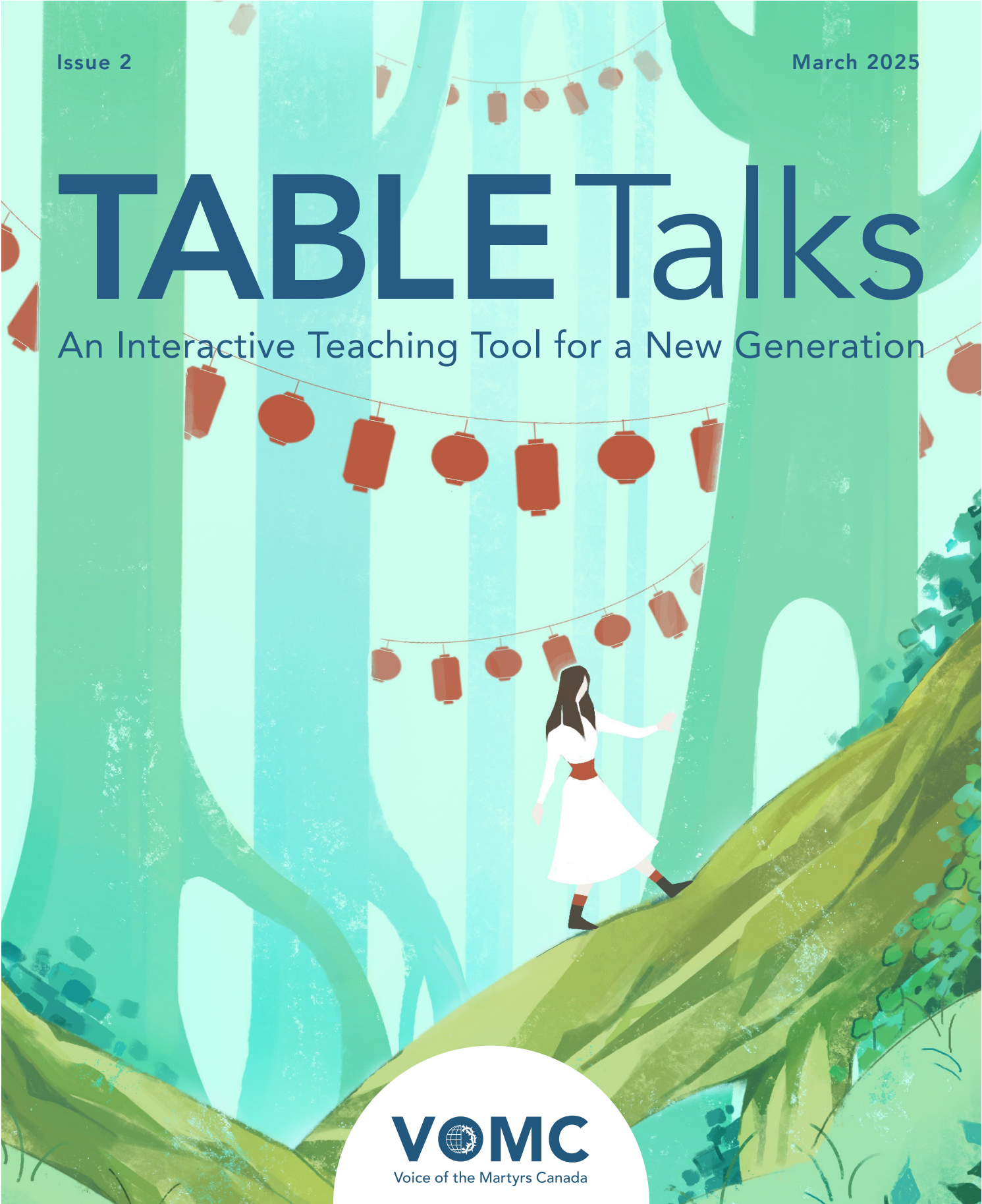


Issue 2

March 2025

TABLETalks

An Interactive Teaching Tool for a New Generation



VOMC
Voice of the Martyrs Canada

FOCUS ON CHINA • FAMILIES WEIGH IN • CROSSWORD & COLOUR

Along the Way

ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK, *EXTREME DEVOTION*, BY VOM INTERNATIONAL

"I want to talk to you about an unusual gift," the father told his beautiful, black-haired daughter. She smiled with anticipation, knowing how special it was to hear him share important lessons about God. Her wise father loved Christ, and everyone who knew him was touched by his kindness and compassion.

The father opened a worn Bible and began sharing the lesson: "This gift is found in Philippians 1:29, which reads, '*For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake....*' Something 'granted' to us is a 'gift,'" her father explained. "The two gifts in this verse are *belief* and *suffering*. Suffering that results from our belief in God is a precious gift, the value of which will only be fully realized in heaven."

The daughter smiled. "Thank you, Papa," she said while reaching up to hug him. "I understand." The young girl knew that her father was preparing her for the trials they may face as Christians living in China, where governing officials frequently arrest pastors and church members, shut down places of worship, prohibit bookstores from selling Bibles, and forbid children from attending church.

Her father, who worked alongside a mission organization to deliver Bibles in provinces across China, regularly reminded her of the risks associated with his ministry work. "But we must never pray against the leaders of our government, nor call down curses on them," he added. "Instead, we need to remember that God is in control of our lives and oversees those who serve the government. Therefore, we must pray that



regardless of what happens to us, our lives will always be pleasing to Him.”

That evening, the girl sat across from her father on the living room floor to help pack bags full of Bibles, which would soon embark on a long journey to a remote community of believers. Despite the risks of the ministry work, the daughter grew full of excitement at the thought that these Bibles were going to be received by people who, for the first time in their lives, would have their own copy of God’s Word.

**“I want to talk to you about
an unusual gift...”**

That same young girl eventually grew up and became the wife of a pastor who has been arrested over ten times because of his ministry activities. During one of his imprisonments, he was beaten so badly that he almost died. Thankfully, he has recovered from the resulting injuries.



Today, this Christian woman and her husband continue to face intense opposition for their faith in Jesus. Yet, the persevering couple are willing to carry on their ministry work because they know that Godly suffering is a gift. Like the woman’s father, they have won countless souls for Christ in Communist China. And despite the constant threat of arrest, interrogation and imprisonment, they continue to faithfully serve God.

TABLE TALKS DISCUSSION

In the story, the young girl’s father explained that the gifts of *belief* and *suffering* are a package deal. Not only are the two impossible to separate, but each of these gifts also serves to strengthen the other. If we have been given the gift of belief in Christ, then we will want to follow Him. Following Jesus Christ may at times involve taking risks, going against popular trends, being misunderstood, and even enduring physical or emotional pain. Yet, it’s encouraging to know that suffering for Jesus can lead us to know Him in richer and more meaningful ways.

- 1. When you come up against challenges, do you tend to give up easily? Are you willing to persevere? Ask God to help you to trust Him during difficult times, and to view your challenges as opportunities to grow stronger.**
- 2. Does it surprise you to learn how difficult it is to live as a Christian in the most populous nation of the world?**
- 3. In China, children are forbidden from attending church with their parents. Why do you think officials made such a law?**
- 4. There is a dire need for copies of God’s Word in China. How many Bibles do you have in your home? What impact do you think equipping more Chinese believers with God’s Word would have on the nation?**

All about China

How to Play: Solve the crossword puzzle by answering the numbered clues.

An answer key and printables are available on our website at: vomcanada.com/TableTalkChina25

ACROSS

- 1. The longest river in Asia.
- 2. The _____ City in Beijing, an imperial palace complex that consists of 9,000 rooms, has housed 24 emperors over the past 500 years.
- 3. Often given as a gift during Chinese New Year's celebrations, a _____ is a red envelope filled with money.
- 4. The Great _____ of China is a structure measuring more than 20,000 km long.
- 5. The capital city of China.

DOWN

- 6. The staple food in China.
- 7. A black and white animal that's native to China.
- 8. A group or family that maintains ruling power in a country.
- 9. _____ is a system of government that aims to create a society in which everything is shared equally among the people.
- 10. An illegal book in China.
- 11. 2025 is the Chinese year of the _____.

Weigh In

Weighing the facts
about China

1.

Based on a lunar cycle, the Chinese New Year is celebrated with extravagant festivals for a duration of 15 days. This year, the celebration began on January 29th.

2.

China has numerous 'smart cities,' where cutting edge technology runs everyday life. This includes paying for purchases with facial recognition (biometrics).

3.

Watchman Nee spent the final 20 years of his life in prison for the sake of the Gospel. One of his most famous sermons was expressed while Chinese authorities watched. Instead of speaking words, he gave an illustration using only smashed glass to convey the message: *By attempting to destroy the church, the government has spread it.*

4.

People under the age of 18 are legally prohibited from attending Christian churches.

Corresponding Question Points:

(1) The Chinese New Year is celebrated so extravagantly and according to tradition to avoid "bad luck" in the upcoming year. Look up the definition of "luck." Does the Bible condone luck? Support your answer with Scripture.

(2) What are the dangers of using biometrics as a key to engage in banking transactions?

(3) During the Communist government's crackdowns on religious groups and activities, the underground Chinese

church not only survived, but thrived! What's the difference between *surviving* and *thriving*? Why is this significant for the church in China? Research information about Watchman Nee.

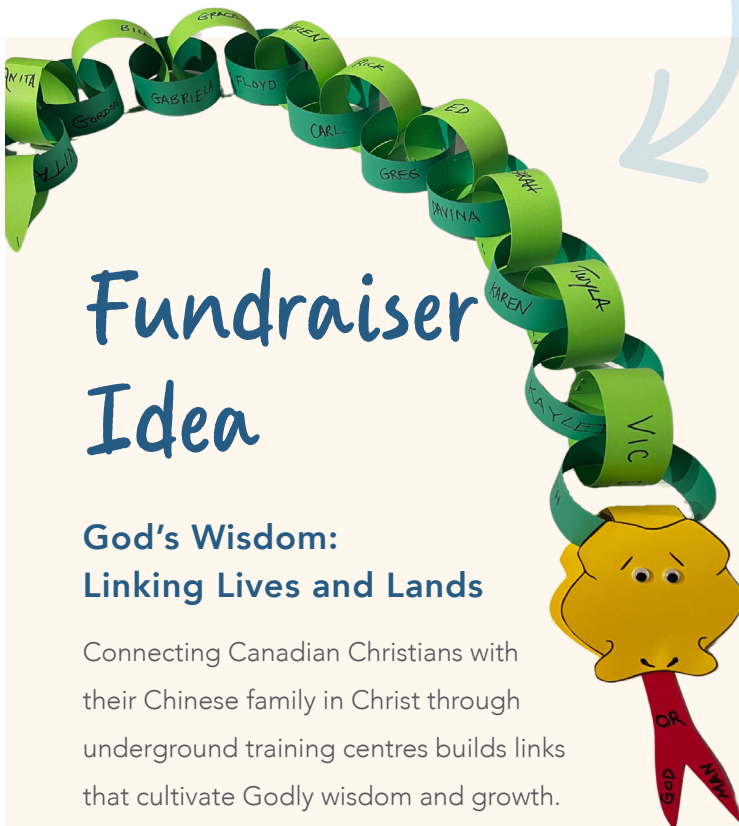
(4) How would laws restricting Christianity impact Christian families? Why would adults be allowed to attend registered churches, but their children are not? How does *wisdom* differ from *truth*? Would keeping young people from reading the Bible impede their spiritual growth?

One Way

Religious Comparison: Compare & Contrast What the Bible Says

The Chinese zodiac, a traditional classification system based on the Chinese calendar, assigns an animal and its reputed attributes each year. The selected animals are eventually repeated in a revolving 12-year cycle. In 2025, it is the year of the snake. According to this belief system, every person born in 2025 is supposed to acquire an abundance of natural wisdom and intuition. Essentially, this form of astrology claims that an individual's behaviour, attitudes, personal strengths and destiny are determined by the lunar cycle.

The Bible teaches that we should seek wisdom and direction from God alone. Christians must not rely on the elements of His creation (such as the sun, moon and stars), but instead on Him – the Master Creator – for guidance, truth and insight. Looking to the stars for answers by following astrology (or the horoscope) is considered idolatry (Deuteronomy 4:19). Therefore, we must only look to God, the One who created the heavens and the earth (James 1:5).



Fundraiser Idea

God's Wisdom: Linking Lives and Lands

Connecting Canadian Christians with their Chinese family in Christ through underground training centres builds links that cultivate Godly wisdom and growth.



Learn more about donating funds by scanning the QR code.

A Way Out

Cut strips of green construction paper. Each time someone purchases a strip for \$2, write the donor's name on it, and then use that strip to build a chain snake. The two prongs of the snake's tongue pose the question, "Whose wisdom do you choose to follow: God's or Man's?"

Send us a photo of your completed snake, along with the collected donations, by March 31st, 2025. A photo of the longest snake will be featured in a future *Table Talks* issue.

For detailed step-by-step instructions, go to:
vomcanada.com/TableTalksChina25

Colouring Connection!

Colour this page with your favourite colours, and email a photo along with your home address to tabletalks@vomcanada.org for a chance to **WIN** a free VOMC book and have your art published in a future issue of *Table Talks*! We will draw the name of one artist whose work will be featured that month.



"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." James 1:5 ESV

"Which Way?" Teaching Tips

Check out our online resources to support you and your family's teaching time.

Free resources are available at our website: vomcanada.com/TableTalksChina25

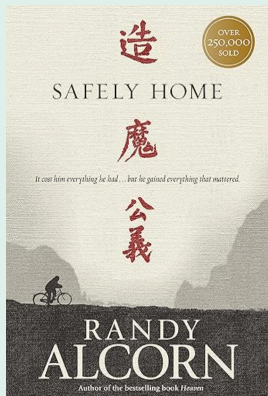


VOMC'S RECOMMENDED READS



TEEN ACTIVITY

Special Online Resource



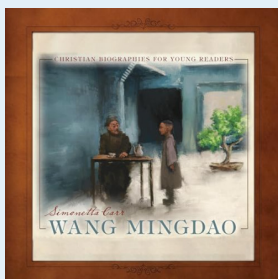
Safely Home by Randy Alcorn is a phenomenal "read aloud" book. This story engages readers from ages as young as ten, while addressing topics that relate to cultural Christianity, Chinese culture, and the cost of following Jesus under Communistic rule.

We have developed **a special online 'teaching tips' resource** to guide you and your older child or teen through Read-Aloud Questions referencing this resource.

To access sample questions that are designed to help your family process the book's content, visit our resource page by scanning the QR code on the right:



TEEN BOOK

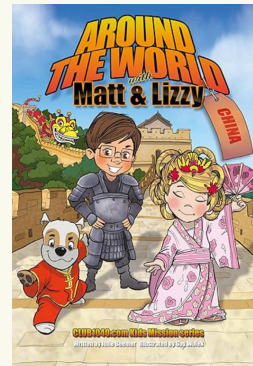


Wang Mingdao
by Simonetta Carr
\$20.00

Pastor Wang Mingdao, a father of the Chinese evangelical church, is remembered for

standing firm for the true Gospel – even though it cost him his freedom.

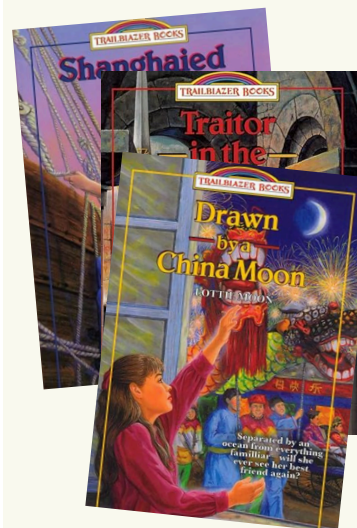
KIDS' BOOKS



Around the World with Matt and Lizzy – China*
by Julie Beemer
(ages 4-9)

Explore China with Matt, Lizzy, and Bentley the dog.

Learn about the children of China – their culture, language, food, weather and landmarks – as they grow in boldness to use their faith and share the love of God near and far.



Trailblazer Books*
by Dave and Neta Jackson
(ages 8-12)

This is an action-packed historical fiction series introducing great

Christian heroes. Each book portrays a significant period in a hero's or heroine's life. Kids will learn about pioneer missionaries and other heroic Christians... and have fun doing so.

**Not available at VOMC's online store, but available elsewhere*

For more resources, including those that are free, visit our online store!

vomcanada.com/store

