



## PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

### Pray for the Persecuted Christians in China

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them - those who are mistreated - since you yourselves are in the Body also.

(Hebrews 13:3)



### China

Total Population: 1,439,323,776

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 9% – **Evangelical Witness: 8%**

Largest Religion: Non-Religious: 44%

Death Rate: 8.2/1000 per year: Just today: 32,335

### We must remember the persecuted church in China

From the Aquila Report. Written by Bill Muehlenberg | Thursday, December 2, 2021

In 2020, under the regime of Chairman Xi Jinping, the policy to sinicize the Christian population has included: the removal of over 900 crosses from churches; the confiscation of Bibles across China as the police raided and closed down many house churches, including state-run churches; churches were also bulldozed and destroyed; and for the first time in 40 years, as attested by Bob (Xiqiu) Fu, a Chinese Christian who fled to the United States, the demand for Christian children to renounce their faith, simultaneously prohibiting them from reading or hearing the Bible read to them by their parents.

Out of sight, out of mind is a big problem for many people, including Christians. We in the comfortable West tend to ignore our brothers and sisters who are suffering greatly elsewhere. Yet we should be fully aware of them and praying for them at the very least.

As we read in Hebrews 13:3: "Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body." Not only must we keep persecuted believers in remembrance, but we must also understand that what is happening to them may soon enough be happening to us.

Consider the nation of China, where horrific persecution of Christians is taking place. The West is not there yet in terms of such anti-Christian bigotry and hatred, but it is slowly getting there. The social credit system in China for example seems now to be a model for many Western governments. So we better be aware of what is happening elsewhere.

Here I will draw upon three recent articles on the situation in China to help give you some idea of what is happening there. Let me begin with a report from Open Doors, which is a ministry to the persecuted church:

China's growing Christian community currently stands at around 96.7 million – just under seven per cent of the country's total population. The church in China continues to enjoy strong growth; however, life for Christians is anything but straightforward. The policy of "Sinicizing" the church is implemented across the country, as the Communist Party relies strongly on Chinese cultural identity to stay in power and limits whatever it perceives as a threat to its control on society.

New restrictions on the internet, social media and non-governmental organizations, and 2018 regulations on religion are strictly applied and seriously limit freedom. Churches are being monitored and closed down, whether they are independent or part of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement.

And it's not just the introduction of new laws that impinge on Christian activity, it's also the stricter implementation of already existing laws, such as the ban on the online sale of Bibles. On a more local level, if a convert from Islam or Buddhism is discovered by their community and family, they are likely to face threats and physical harm – all in an effort to win them back. Spouses may be forced to divorce. Neighbours and the community may even report the practice of Christian activities to the authorities, who could take action to stop them....

Thousands of churches have been damaged or destroyed, some confiscated, in a campaign that has spread to almost every region of the country. Crosses have also been removed from churches. Meanwhile, laws on regulating religion, which were introduced in February 2018 and enhanced in February 2020, continue being rolled out in an increasing number of provinces.

There are reports that citizens are being financially rewarded for disclosing information on Christians and other minorities to the authorities. This reflects the determination of the Communist Party to exert its control over all areas of life.

[www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/china/](http://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/china/)

Another article discusses some of these matters in more detail:

Recently, a local authority in northeastern China announced financial rewards to people who report “illegal religious activities”. The Meilisi Daur District United Front Work Department of Qiqihar, Heilongjiang Province, released “The Reward System For Reporting Illegal Religious Activities Offences” on Monday, saying that informants could be paid up to 1,000 yuan (US\$150) for tips about illicit foreign infiltration.