



# 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%

## 10 Facts about Christian Persecution in China

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By Emily Bontrager

In 2021, China moved from #23 on Open Doors' Christian Persecution World Watch List to #17.

Here are 10 facts about the persecution Christians in China are facing.

### 1. Government-approved churches and house churches

There are two options for churches in China: government-approved churches or illegal house churches.

In government approved churches, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has the power to monitor what is taught during services to ensure the promotion of communist values. Church gatherings must be approved by authorities and must take place in designated places. Additionally, church leadership requires the permission of the CCP to be legally appointed. Deviation from the government's guidelines can lead to any number of consequences. Even with the CCP's approval, churches can still be shut down.

On the other hand, house churches usually have smaller congregations and are unregistered with the government. House churches have more freedom to preach the true Gospel and less pressure to adhere to communist values. However, house churches are illegal and often raided by the authorities.

An article with Christianity Daily states, "ChinaAid said that overall, 100% of house churches have experienced some level of persecution in 2020. Every house church's core leader was summoned for questioning by the police, with some detained longer and in danger of being criminally prosecuted under false charges."

### **2. There is a five year plan to "sinicize" Christianity**

"Sinicization" is the process of making Christianity adhere to Chinese tradition through promoting the CCP's communist ideology.

ChinaAid reports that the CCP demands all religious groups to "take President Xi's remarks about religious work as their guiding principles. Religious adherents must make him the center of their belief systems."

Currently the CCP is in the fourth year of its five year plan.

### **3. Pastors require government-issued licenses to preach the Bible**

Pastors and priests of government-approved churches require licenses to possess, carry, and preach from the Bible.

### **4. Churches need government approval to carry out financial moves**

Per Article 34 of China's "Administrative Measures for Religious Groups," financial moves by religious communities must be submitted to the government for approval and cannot be carried out without government approval.

This gives the CCP a "final say" in how churches are allowed to grow and operate within their communities.

### **5. Local governments have forcibly removed and demolished church crosses**

An article with the Guardian states that between 2014 and 2016 more than 1,000 crosses were forcibly removed from government-approved churches in the Zhejiang province.

## **6. Christians have been required to replace images of Christ with images of the state leaders**

Local authorities have also forced Christians to remove images of Christ and replace them with pictures of President Xi or Chairman Mao. Additionally, statues of Mary and crucifixes have been removed from some Catholic churches.

According to an article by the Daily Mail, “The government was said to be targeting poverty-stricken residents who received social welfare payments, and those families must instead display portraits of Chairman Mao and President Xi Jinping.”

## **7. Local governments have demolished churches**

In addition to removing crosses and images of Christ, authorities have forcibly demolished both government approved and house churches.

According to China Aid’s 2020 report, “CCP authorities completed nine documented church demolitions, disconcerting more than 5000 members and attendees. In addition to demolishing churches, CCP authorities forcibly commandeered and repurposed an unknown number of churches and religious sites.”

## **8. The Bible Ban**

Carrying a Bible is banned, and the sale of Bibles, both online and in stores that are not government approved, is illegal.

An article from the Washington Times states, “Anyone carrying a Bible faces immediate arrest and a jail term. Visitors entering China also face the same punishment. Except licensed priests, nobody is expected to own a Bible. Now they can only be sold in state-affiliated church bookshops. The people cannot print the Bible, record it onto CDs or publish it on the Internet.”

## **9. Citizens are encouraged to report their Christian neighbors to the government**

Illegal activity, such as owning Bibles or attending house churches, is encouraged by the CCP to be reported.

Open Doors 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.”

## **10. The CCP is rewriting the Bible to reflect communist values**

The CCP is currently rewriting the entire Bible, editing it to align with communist values. While the project is unfinished, a story from John 8 was rewritten in 2018 and featured in a state-approved textbook.

From China Aid's 2020 report: "The original account [from John 8] records: He (Jesus) stood up and said to them, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.' ... But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

Jesus stood up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?'

She said, 'No one, Lord.'

And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.'

In the official textbook, however, the altered passage now reads: Jesus once said to the angry crowd who was trying to stone a woman who had sinned, 'He who is without sin among you, let him cast a stone at her.'

When his words came to their ears, they stopped moving forward.

When everyone went out, Jesus stoned the woman himself, and said, 'I am also a sinner.'"

Join us in prayer for the persecuted saints around the world. We pray every day Monday through Friday morning at 7:00am and 9:30am and at 9:00pm every Friday Night in our Family Prayer.

We are extremely blessed to live in a country where, at least currently, none of the 10 things above are happening. We can pray as our brothers and sister suffer.