



# 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)



Total Population: 1,439,323,776

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 8% – **Evangelical Witness: 3%**

Non-Religious: 44%

### A Rise in Every Facet of Persecution

The situation for Christians has deteriorated all over China. Chinese government wants to “sinicize” every religious ideology in the country—meaning, to make beliefs, including Christianity, fall in line with their interpretation of Communism. This means a steady drip of pressure, where the government increases surveillance, control and restrictions of believers.

New restrictions on internet, social media, non-governmental organizations and the 2018 regulations on religion are strictly applied, increasingly spread throughout the country, and all seriously limit freedom. The pressure to fall in line with the prevailing ideology of praising the achievements of the Communist Party has become much stronger and poses arguably one of the greatest risks for Christians in the long term. It used to be said that the government would crack down on churches perceived as too large, too political or too connected to foreign interests. Today, that is only a guideline; many churches are being monitored and closed down, not only independent house churches, but also some government-sanctioned churches. The government even banned the online sale of Bibles in 2018.

### How Christians are Suffering

All churches are perceived as a threat if they become too large, too political or invite foreign guests. A policy of "sinicizing" the church is becoming increasingly influential because the Communist Party is relying strongly on Chinese cultural identity to stay in power. The new restrictions on internet, social media and NGOs-and the new regulations on religion-are all seriously limiting freedom. However, Christians are suffering not only due to the introduction of new laws but also the stricter implementation of already existing ones.

In addition, when a convert from Islam or from Tibetan Buddhism is discovered by their community and family, they are usually threatened, physically harmed and reported to the local authorities-all in an effort to win them back. Spouses may be forced to divorce, and children can be taken away from Christian parents.

### Examples

There were no killings reported in the WWL 2020 period. State action against churches went hand-in-hand with interrogations and sometimes detainment and arrest of Christian leaders, as well as threats to congregation members. Some attacks involved high-profile churches. Such incidents took place in several provinces with an emphasis on Henan, a populous province with a sizable Christian minority, but went far beyond Henan's borders. Jiangxi was another area from where many reports came. Interruption to church services were most often at the hands of members of security forces or the United Front Work Department; and sometimes locally hired mobs.

### Pray for Your Brothers and Sisters in China

- Currently Bibles can be read on the internet in China but not sold online. Pray against Chinese Christians losing access to the Bible.
- Pray for courage for believers to meet together as the culture becomes increasingly hostile to Christian churches. In July 2019, authorities in a northern Chinese city opened a special hotline for citizens reporting unauthorized religious activities, including evangelism, distribution of illegal publications and hosting unapproved events.
- In some areas, children are not allowed to attend church services, suggesting pressing efforts to stunt the growth of Christianity for emerging generations. Pray children have access to learning more about their faith.
- Pray house churches would flourish across the country and for new leaders who would step up to lead these churches despite the risk.