

Persecution of the Church in China



Two weeks ago, Bright Hope World received an email from one of our partners working in China. The email said: "As a result of widespread persecution of Christians from house churches in China leading to restrictions of freedom of worship, imprisonment (two of our evangelists are now in prison), burning of crosses and bibles, I write to seek your assistance and fellowship to pray and advocate for the suffering church in China".

There are somewhere between 90 million and 250 million Christians in China (statistics are very hard to source accurately). If you compare this to the 88 million members of the ruling – and atheistic - Communist Party you begin to understand why the government is starting to get worried.

While the constitution of China guarantees religious freedom, the reality is quite different. The Communist Party has apparently determined that the influence of Christianity is growing at an alarming rate and has started to ramp up action against the church. Officially, Christians must only worship in state-registered churches, but the majority of Christians are actually involved in the underground church, where smaller number of believers meet together in such a way as to avoid government attention.

Yet that attention is increasing nonetheless. While public churches are seeing crosses torn down and bibles burned, house churches are also becoming more of a target of the government. In addition to the evangelists our partner has seen jailed, in March, a prominent house church leader was sentenced to seven years in prison after he built Christian schools in Myanmar. In July, six Christians were sentenced to up to 13 years in jail for involvement in a "cult", code for a house church.

Many Christians have lost their homes, been fired from their jobs or been sent to 're-education camps' to help them to learn to become 'more Chinese' by learning loyalty to the Communist Party.

And what has been the global response to this increasing persecution? I am not sure there has really been one. Our political leaders are too busy thinking about free trade deals and the economic benefits of a relationship with China to give much pause in relation to the persecution of Christians. It is easier to simply consider these people 'trouble makers' or talk of 'an internal political issue'.

We don't see it like that. We believe that we have an obligation to stand with our brothers and sisters. We see far too much of this kind of behaviour around the world, and it is on the increase. So please be praying. Tell others about what is happening. Write letters. Get involved.

Because one day we might find this persecution directed towards us.

Fraser Scott
Executive Director

Bright Hope News

It is an exciting time for Bright Hope World.

One of the areas of strategic focus for us is growing our team. We are bringing on more Partnership Facilitators over time so that the burden on Kevin and Helen Honore (who look after a very sizable chunk of the world for Bright Hope World) is eased somewhat.

As more people join us and slowly take over the relationships we have with partners in the field, we have a greater ability to find new partners in the areas where we are working and to develop deeper relationships as our people on the ground have more time and focus.

We have, in our process at the moment, a record number of individuals and couples that are moving forward towards taking over Partnership Facilitator roles. This takes a number of years as new team members travel with us, learn our values and get to know the partners in the field. Here at Bright Hope World, nothing happens quickly when it comes to relationships!

We will potentially see as many as nine new people joining our team officially in the next year or two. This sets us up well for the future and ensures our partners are well cared for, encouraged and challenged. We look forward to introducing these new folks as they come on board.

Life Change Story – Pemba, Mozambique



A recent update from our partners Chrissy and Suzen Lukanga working amongst Muslims in Pemba, Mozambique. They talk about two women they have been meeting with.

“Angelina is from an animist / Muslim background. Her parents forced her as a 12 year old to bring money into the house by becoming a prostitute. She began to drink and go with men, most of whom paid her nothing. Most young girls become sexually active at puberty as part of the initiation ceremonies and witchcraft. She became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion. That’s when we found her. Immediately she heard the gospel she became a believer and her family dumped her.”

“She came to live with us and we brought her up and her baby. She finished school and then did some more courses. Chrissy became her dad and joined the school board to make sure she was treated OK. She then went to Palma to live with her brother, did another course and after a couple of years got a job. She has started a church there, got married and had two more children. Her husband is unstable and is hardly ever around. “

“Belinha is from a Muslim background and has two children. She was sickly as a child and found relationships very hard. Her children are from two different men. A couple of years ago she was going on a bus to visit a witchdoctor about her sickness. She sat beside one of the church members who started talking to her about Jesus and church. She came to church and poured out her heart to them.”

“They brought her to our place and we counselled her and prayed. She had all sorts of “medicines” on her and in her house. She brought them all and burned them. Two weeks later her crazy dreams stopped and she stopped running with men. Her father wondered at the change. Her brothers mocked her but one of them has softened and now sides with her against her drunkard brother. We have been invited to go to her home to pray with the family and there are no barriers. She is known by the community as the girl who loves church. She is now part of the discipleship team and we hope one day she will become part of a church planting team.”

Read more about Chrissy and Suzen’s ministry (MOZ02c) at: <http://www.brighthopeworld.com/partnerships.asp?pid=60>.

Prayer and Praise

1. Pray for the church in China as it faces a concerning increase in persecution. Pray for God’s protection and strengthening.
2. Pray (and praise) for Angelina and Belinha in Mozambique. Thank God for their changed lives and ask his protection from opposition and the challenges of life in such a difficult place.
3. Pray for our new team members in development, and ask God to supply them with the means to serve the poorest of the poor (our positions are unpaid!).



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