



PASTOR WORKER REPORT
WINTER 2023

CHINA



A WORD FROM OUR CHINA MINISTRY MANAGER

“And now, Lord, behold their threatenings and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word.”

Acts 4:29

As the years go on, things are getting increasingly harder for the Christians here in China. Since 2018, when new laws were made resulting in the closing of many churches around China, there have been progressively more restrictions on believers.

In July of this year, China introduced a new anti-spying law. Under the terms of this sweeping new law, all investigation activity and data gathering in China—printed, electronic, or oral—can be effectively outlawed as “espionage.” This could be the fate that is now awaiting many Christian professionals and consultants in China or even just ordinary businesses and their staff. This is also a threat to what we do. We have seen firsthand how, in the past, old laws were used to arrest and hold some friends here for over two years.

The previous espionage law that Xi introduced in 2014 only revolved around “state secrets.” What state secrets meant exactly wasn’t well-defined, but it was still far easier to imagine than what we now face. There is just no way to define exactly what is considered “investigative activity.” Is meeting with Chinese friends to practice English too much?

Chinese state media has reported that espionage activities will now include “activities that endanger national security,” state secrets, and intelligence, as well as—and this is the alarming part—“other documents, data, materials, and items related to national security and national interests, or to instigate, lure, coerce or bribe state staff” to provide such items. The law, which took effect this month, bans the transfer of any information related to national security and interests. While the law doesn’t define terms, it broadens the definition of spying to include cyberattacks against state organizations or critical infrastructure.

This kind of authority is problematic. “This is a law that potentially could make illegal in China the kind of mundane activities that a business would have to do to seek due diligence before you do a business deal,” American ambassador Nicholas Burns said. “We are now thinking a mere business conversation could become a crime.”

A crucial change is that areas previously covered by privacy provisions under the criminal code which carried a maximum penalty of three years in jail (but usually ended with only a slap on the wrist) can now earn life terms or even a death sentence.

Please pray that we would have wisdom while we look at a few different ways that we can operate in this environment that will help us be able to meet and train the leaders here. Pray that we will be able to stand strong in the gap.

~D, OTAN China Ministry Manager

MEETING NEEDS, TEACHING THE WORD, AND PRAYING FOR PROTECTION Updates and prayer requests from our Chinese pastors

I continue to teach Bible classes and preach on Sunday in our church. Also I lead a small study group on Wednesday night. Three sisters, a brother, and 1 child joined our church this year. In July I visited a former discipleship school student. Her father had a cerebral infarction. He was in danger during the surgery, but God saved his life by everyone's prayer. She asked me to help with the rehabilitation training for her father. I spent time to read the Bible with him every morning, exercise, and pray with him. Also, I got to share the good news to the other patients.

I was also able to go to the Russian border to meet with a Russian pastor to encourage him and see how we could work together for the gospel. Pray that we can reach more people in the city.

~Pastor Y.

Currently I am preaching and training some students for the next generation and also doing evangelism. I am really thankful for your prayer and help. I am thankful for God's protection, even though the national environment is not so great.

I have some prayer requests. Please pray that I have the strength to face the pressure from the authorities and close family. A couple of meeting places have stopped gathering. Some of the coworkers couldn't be contacted due to being watched. Pray that I have wisdom to raise my children spiritually and physically healthy (12, 6, and 6 months old). Pray for wisdom to interact with people so that I can share the good news with them and to be content with what He provides and keep the faith like when I first believed.

~Pastor W.

We are still meeting with 3 groups in our city. We are also going out to the countryside to meet with 2 other people groups that we have connections with. We had a baptism for 5 new believers in one of these groups. This was such a blessing to see. There are not many believers in this area, and we hope we will have safety to start a church among this people group.

~Pastor C.



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CONTACT OUTREACH TO ASIA NATIONALS

The pastors and church workers we partner with are grateful for your prayers and financial support. God is using your investment to further the gospel and strengthen the body of Christ around the world. If you have questions or want to know more about our outreach in China, we'd love to connect with you.



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