



CHINESE CHURCH SUPPORT MINISTRIES

CHINA PRAYER LETTER



MAY 2022

We (Cannot) Chat

Since March 1st, 2022, when the Chinese Communist Party's "Measures for the Administration of Internet Religious Information Services" came into effect, Christian accounts and groups on WeChat have come under heavy suppression.

China Aid shared the experience of Ran Yunfei of Early Rain Covenant Church. He used WeChat for a group called "How to Read" and each month its members posted the names of recommended books for which the the group could vote. Among the eight books they nominated in a recent poll, one was named "The Imitation of Christ" by Thomas à Kempis.

The group received an alert warning from Wechat that, "The word 'Christ' you are trying to publish violates regulations on Internet Information Services, including but not limited to the following categories:

- pornography, gambling, and drug abuse



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Seeking to serve, strengthen and support the church and the people of China

- excessive marketing
- incitement

The issue can be resolved through one of the following:

1. Edit your content
2. Submit for review

It was only after replacing part of the word “Christ” that could they avoid the censorship.

“The Imitation of Christ” is considered to be a best selling classic by the Catholic religion and was first written in Latin in 1418-1427 AD. Kempis was a member of the Devotio Moderna movement. However one approaches this book, it would be difficult to place it, or the word “Christ” under any of the three categories itemized by WeChat!

Unfortunately, the latest internet laws signal a whole new level of censorship for Chinese Christians. From now on, only licensed and approved religious groups, schools, and organizations

with valid permits can conduct online teaching or sermons. Individuals or organisations cannot so much as share a link or repost a comment that is related to religion in any way, shape or form. They can no longer organize religious activities on the Internet, fundraise for religious purpose, live broadcast, or record and broadcast religious meetings.

Ironically, it seems these laws may nudge the church to further imitate Christ. He chose not to come in an era of mass media, but travelled on foot, led by the Spirit He often met people where they were - fisherman on the shore, the woman at the well. He was the King of Kings and yet he had only 12 personal disciples. We can expect that laws like this will induce big changes in how Chinese Christians meet, interact and live out their faith.

“Now as for you, the anointing that you received from him resides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, it is true and is not a lie. Just as it has taught you, you reside in him” [1 John 2:27].

Chr*st

As he approached the road leading down from the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

But some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” He answered, “I tell you, if they keep silent, the very stones will cry out!”

Luke 19: 37-40 (NET)

The most fascinating thing about China's "rule of law" is watching the resourcefulness of Chinese as they "lawfully" navigate around each new promulgation. In April, rules were introduced that affect what can and can't be uttered on the internet. It could be described as an unspoken list of unspeakable words. Among the unspeakables is the word "Christ".

Now when a child asks a friend on WeChat, "It's 2022..... 2022 years since what?" The answer is "2022 years since Chr*st's death."

When they ask about the meaning of Easter or Chr*stmas, the response simply has to say, "It was when G*d gave His only begotten Son to die for our siin on a cr*ss."

He@vn and He// could be harder to explain but with G*d's gr@ce and a little help from the script2es, even a child can understand.

If the child asks, "Who are the most

influential men who ever lived?" The answer is obvious....@da@m, Moβes and Geesus.

'Deleting' free conversation around religion from the internet is certainly one of the most brazen communist attacks of freedom of bel**f, a quality most nations, including China itself, claim to uphold.

Only licensed religi0us teachers and licensed platforms can now emit words pertaining to religi0n. Everyone else must be silent.

A document that many value as s@cred, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, clearly states:

Article 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

International Short-Term Teams

Email CCSM at
teams@amccsm.org to
find out what we have on offer.

Article 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Under threat of punishment and fines internet services and providers in China must now act as the atheist government's censors and most netizens will also obligingly self-censor.

Ultimately, there is a chief censor over and above all censors. He blots out names from the Book of Life.

Christian Re-education Camp survivor comes to USA



Obulbek Turdakun is an ethnic Kyrgyz with Chinese citizenship. He was a detainee in the Chinese Communist Party's concentration camp system in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and is the first Christian to come forward publically with his story.

held under house arrest for about a year then, in December 2019, he fled on foot with his wife and 11-year-old son to Kyrgyzstan.

The now infamous "re-education" camps are reported to have held an estimated 1 to 3 million Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz and other ethnic and religious minorities.

In February 2018, Obulbek was in the southwestern Ulugqat County of Xinjiang when he was detained on a charge that he had stayed longer than permitted on a prior trip to Kyrgyzstan. Obulbek was taken and held for 10 months in a forced labor camp. He, along with 22 other prisoners, experienced both psychological and physical torture including forced medical procedures. Obulbek claims that after one injection he was unable to walk for months, and had to rely on other inmates to carry him. After release, he was

The Uyghur Minority, make up the majority of Turkic people in Xinjiang (and in the camps), but there are around 1.5 million Kazakhs and more than 200,000 Kyrgyz who also inhabit this far western region.

Kazakh human rights advocate, Serikzhan Bilash, says that according to their research there are 500,000 to 700,000 ethnic Kazakhs in the camps. Many families remain separated due to some members having fled Xinjiang

using dual passports. Prior to 2016, those with dual passports could freely visit their second homeland. This suddenly changed that year when Chinese authorities began confiscating their passports at the border and arrests, and even disappearances, followed. Dual citizenship is no longer allowed.

The Kyrgyz government initially gave Obulbek a special residence permit but then stopped renewing it, placing him at risk of deportation back to China. China was actively trying to repatriate fleeing Chinese citizens.

ChinaAid, along with two USA congressmen, lawyers and other organisations worked together to bring the family to the United States. Keeping the family safe in the meantime was difficult, but they were finally authorized to enter the U.S. on a special public benefit parole, which does not grant immigration status. Obulbek will now present his eyewitness account of the human rights abuses he saw and personally experienced. It will be part of a case against China being brought before prosecutors at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, the Netherlands.

Bringing a trial to the ICC usually requires the defendant to be an ICC member state, which China is not. But according to lawyer Rodney Dixon:

“If Chinese security agents come into Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and are arresting people there and bringing them

back into China to put them into camps - the ICC has jurisdiction over the entire crime...”

In this case, currently being prepared by international lawyers, the aim is to establish ICC jurisdiction by focusing on the Chinese government’s repression of Xinjiang residents living in Tajikistan, which is an ICC member state, and demonstrating this is a larger pattern affecting other countries as well.

Obulbek Turdakun is unique among the multitude of witnesses in that He is not Muslim or Uyghur, and he has studied law, a skill that helped him gather useful evidence while in captivity. As Obulbek is Christian, it brings in question China’s claim that re-education was to correct dangerous extremist Islamic ideology. A broad look at China’s actions gives the strong impression that China’s camps are part of a plan to bring every individual and ethnic group in line with CCP ideology and Han culture.

ChinaAid will assist the family in their relocation to Texas. On arrival in America, Obulbek had this to say:

“First, I’m grateful to our God,” Obulbek said. “I’m also grateful to the U.S. government and the friends who helped us the whole time. We would not have been able to safely arrive in America without their help.”

[Sources; ChinaAid, [Axios](#)]



News Briefs - May

This month, it is clear that things are 'heating up' for people of faith in China. While we watch the temperature rising, its important to keep our eyes on the Lord, to take courage in Him, and to keep things in perspective. While doors are closing, there are many that are by no means shut! And even those that are shut ...Christ can walk through.

Locked and Blocked

Since the onset of the pandemic, Chinese authorities have held to a zero-Covid policy to 'beat the virus'. Even super cities such as Xi'an and more recently Shanghai have not been spared from lockdowns and some residents are at boiling point over draconian restrictions and rigorous testing regimes. Claims to starving

citizens, deaths of elderly patients left alone in hospital, and children being separated from parents have pushed peoples patience to the brink.

Meanwhile, the lockdowns have forced Christian communities online where they are exposed to greater surveillance. Christians among the millions of Party members will face penalties if caught engaging in online Christian meetings. Other Chinese worry their social credit score could be negatively affected, or that there could be repercussions in their job or education. There are many reasons cannot meet

online for Christian fellowship.

Concurrent with being locked down, Christians are now also blocked. Mentions of religion on social media, or other platforms, by anyone not licensed to disseminate religious material are now banned....even in private groups. Clearly this situation must be very difficult for believers. Where do they go for person-to-person discipleship, or group fellowship, since they can neither meet physically nor online? As churches start to apply for the newly required Internet Information Services Licenses they will be able to prerecord sermons to (identity verified) viewers. Some will be able to operate forums but it is to be expected that many churches will not have the resources required to operate or police these. Time will tell as to how the church will evolve in this new heavily restricted environment.

Off-Campus Censorship

The Beijing Municipal Commission

PRAYER POINTERS

MAY 2022

We (Cannot) Chat

Pray for peace for the Chinese Christians as they face ever tightening restrictions.

Thank God we have the comfort of His promise to be our teacher. Pray that believers will reside in Him.

Pray that TSPM churches will be successful in attaining the qualifications, resources and licenses required to run their websites and platforms.

Chr*st

Pray for those believers who rely heavily on the internet to stay in touch with Christian friends, support and fellowship.

Praise God who is working out His plans and who laughs at those who plot against Him. (Psalm 37:12-13).

Ask God to remind His people in China of the works He has done in their lives, to encourage and strengthen them for the continued work ahead.

Christian Re-education Camp survivor comes to USA

Pray for the Obulbek and his family as they settle into a new life in Texas, USA.

Praise God that they now have free access to scripture, Christian music, teaching and fellowship.

Pray that they quickly find solid Christian friends.

Pray that their son is able to settle into a new school.

Pray for their safety and for truth and justice to prevail.



PRAYER POINTERS

News Briefs - May

Pray that the Lord will comfort those in locked down cities who cannot communicate with others about the Lord.

Pray that the Lord will show His people in all situations, how they can continue to meet and be disciplers and disciples.

Pray for teachers and those who serve the Lord in the education sector. Pray that they will be protected, encouraged and guided by his Spirit in all they do.

Pray for Party members, that the Lord will use a book about atheism to raise questions about the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Predestination, Plans and Purposes

Praise God that He is far above and beyond all we can imagine. There is none beside Him. Thank Him that he has set us free from the power of sin and death. Not for price nor reward, but by grace.

Praise God, who knew us before we were born, the God who is outside time.

He is a just God, who longs to save 'all who look to Him'. Ask for help us to trust and rest in Him while He works out His plan and purposes, not only for us, but for all the ends of the earth.

Pray that God will make a safe way for His labourers to return to China.

Pray for peoples in China who are forced to work away from family, friends and fellowships.

Navigating the New Internet Regulations

Give thanks for the internet and the blessing it has been in building up the church.

Pray that the offline churches will find creative ways in order to carry on regular worship as China intensifies its restrictions on the church.

Pray that TSPM churches will find auditor candidates that can pass the necessary exams.

Pray for ministries that work to supply sound, safe and secure resources to the offline church.



Chinese Church Support Ministries

Seeking to serve, strengthen
and support the church and
the people of China

of Education, whose regulations often become the model for other cities and provinces, has issued new rules on what text books and materials can and cannot be used for off-campus teaching. Extra-curricular or off-campus teaching materials now have 12 new commandments of what they may not contain. Included in this blacklist is material that “promotes religious doctrines, religion, xie jiao, feudal superstitions, and similar.” In addition, materials produced abroad can only be used with authorisation. As “promoting religion” encompasses a broad definition, it could rule out materials mentioning holidays such as Easter and Christmas, Thanksgiving, the Gregorian calendar, the Five legal Chinese religions and many other topics. According to the edict, teachers who broach these topics will lose their jobs and all involved will be punished. [source: BitterWinter.com]

Xi Jinping’s ‘Bible’ of Scientific Atheism

Protestant Christians are by no means alone in the current onslaught against religion in China. All five of the state approved religions are experiencing Xi Jinping’s aspiration to remove religion from the public sphere using censorship, removal of statues, architecture and

signage, and by hindering them with burdensome licensing and paperwork, training requirements, restrictions and offensive surveillance. Unregistered groups and religions outside the approved five, face arrests, fines and harsh penalties.

Now, after quelling people of faith, Xi Jinping is actively touting his Marxist beliefs as ‘fact’ with a book being promoted in colleges and to CCP cadres.

The book titled, “The Principles of Scientific Atheism” by Li Shen claims that both the non-existence of God and the fact that religion is harmful have been demonstrated scientifically.

If this claim of absolute “scientific proof” is taken as an unquestioned doctrine, then it is not a stretch to believe it could have future applications in law. Watch this space.

At the National Conference on Work Related to Religious Affairs in December 2021, Xi Jinping made the request that Marx’s views on religion should be more thoroughly studied within the CCP, which has over 90 million members.

Predestination, Plans and Purposes

The Chinese word for “fate” or “destiny” is mingyùn 命运, which translates “the turn of events in life”. But there is another

term, yuánfèn 缘分, which is better likened to “fateful coincidence”. This concept describes good and



bad chances and potential relationships. It can also be translated as “destiny, luck as conditioned by one’s past”, or “natural bond or affinity among friends.” Unlike karma in Buddhism, *yuánfèn* is interactive rather than individual.

The understanding is that previous interactions in past incarnations with a particular person play a role in deciding the outcome of future encounters. These could be romantic, family, business, or even political in nature.

The root of *yuánfèn* stems from Buddhism, and in modern China today the concept remains strong, even among university students. Certainly, beliefs around predestination and fatalism have diminished, and belief in *yuánfèn* has waned, but continuity with past conceptions is still strong.

Whether it is *yuánfèn* or *mingyùn* influencing a relationship or situation, how lamentable it is that the present could be determined by an unemotional universe or a forgotten past life. As a *yuánfèn* bond can only be

identified by common backgrounds, interests, and emotional impressions, how can one ever be certain it was not just coincidence or wishful thinking?

The Living God said, “A man’s heart plans his way, But the Lord directs His steps.” He also said, “I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from beginning.”

Thankfully, we can be absolutely sure the Good Shepherd is who He said He is. How? He has proved it over and over in Bible prophecy through His relationship with the nation of Israel. Approximately 2,500 prophecies are in the pages of the Bible, and to date around 2,000 have come to pass.

One such remarkable prophecy was given by Isaiah, regarding King Cyrus the Great. Around 180 years before Cyrus became King of Persia in 560BC, Isaiah’s prophecy was written, and it recorded God’s words specifically for Cyrus - even addressing him by name - twice, saying God would go before him to subdue nations. God said he would be “His anointed” and “I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; He shall build

My city, and let My exiles go free. Not for price nor reward.” (Isaiah 45, NKJV)

This prophecy was given well before Cyrus was born, and before the Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered, and over 130 years before the Southern Kingdom was swept into exile in Babylon. History shows that Cyrus did indeed subdue Babylon and allowed the exiles to return and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and ultimately complete the second temple.

Our God is beyond the bounds of time. He has foreknowledge but does not ‘predestine’ our actions. There are times he goes before us and directs our steps. As He did with Persia, He is able to use China for His purposes. He says in Isaiah 45:7, “I form the light and create the darkness, I make peace and create calamity.”

God says, “And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Saviour; There is none besides Me. Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth!”

Navigating the New Internet Regulations

Both the TSPM churches and the government’s Provincial Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureaus have had to prepare for the licensing process now required under the new regulations titled “Measures for the Administration of Internet Religious Information Services”.

Seminaries, Churches, and even the China Christian Council (CCC) and the TSPM must make applications for an IRIS (Internet Religious Information Services) License in order to keep using their websites. This license also covers the use of apps, forums, blogs, microblogs, public accounts, instant messaging tools, live webcasts, etc. Basically it encompasses all internet religious information publishing services, reprinting services, communication platform services, and

other services related to Internet religious information.

According to China Partner, seminaries and pastors they have spoken with have already applied for the IRIS License, and while awaiting approval, they are still able to conduct their usual online ministries. This is great news, but, as usual in China, things can be very different in different regions. In Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Xinjiang pastors are less confident that their applications will be successful, and church websites are reported to have gone offline. Jianghe, the WeChat official account of Christ’s Church (Mingde Church) in Urumqi (Xinjiang) stopped updating in June 2021, and their Sunday services are



now mainly conducted by joining the live stream of a TSPM seminary.

To hold an IRIS License, the party applying must be equipped with at least one full-time religious information auditor whose job it is to inspect the religious material hoping to be disseminated.

They must be a graduate of an officially registered religious institutions or be religious clergy, and they must undergo identity verification.

Provincial Ethnic and Religious Bureaus are conducting training and exams for these auditors. According to ChinaAid, the topics covered in their training can include:

- Religious policies and regulations.
- Measures for the Administration of Internet Religious Information Services.
- Anti-cult knowledge.
- Anti-terrorism knowledge.
- Internet religious cases.

- Basic knowledge of various religions.
- Matters related to the application

for Internet religious information services licenses etc.

It will also include Xi Jinping's Thought on the rule of law, the Constitution, and socialist core values.

Once a church has attained a licensed auditor, they can apply for their IRIS license if they meet further conditions. And of course these rule out unregistered churches or churches with any foreign influence.

They must also have the management, technical and security systems needed to manage and monitor their service.

If applying for a broadcast platform service, they will need to submit rules for verifying and managing users, user agreement models, and mechanisms for handling complaints and reports.

And finally, they must have the facilities and funds to operate their service.

Many churches will need to scale back or stop their online ministries being unable to meet the necessary conditions.



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