

Scholar conducts survey of Chinese church persecution

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<http://www.chinaaid.org/2018/11/scholar-conducts-survey-of-chinese.html>

Pastor Liu Tongsu, the North American scholar of political and religious issues, conducted a questionnaire regarding the current situation of house churches in the late October. However, participants involved in the questionnaire couldn't complete the questionnaire due to Chinese government's interference. The limited data should not affect the analysis of results. That is, it is trending that Chinese government intervenes house churches and what stance house churches hold in this respect.

ChinaAid is authorized to share the results publicly.

House Churches' Current Situation Questionnaire (Full Article)

(Results of an uncompleted project)

Liu Tongsu

It was originally planned to conduct a questionnaire concerning how Chinese house churches have been persecuted by the [Chinese] political power among house church members attending a training. It was planned to collect about 100 questionnaires (some trainees may have come from the same church, and the questionnaire is about churches). Nevertheless, about 90% of the people signed up for the training didn't make it due to the Chinese government's interference. Therefore, only 14 questionnaires were returned. In addition, I picked up three questionnaires while stopping by Beijing. The quantitative reference value can be ignored because of the small data. The author decided to post the results of the questionnaire in hopes to show some trends conveyed by the small amount of data.

I. Questionnaire and procedure:

Participants: Members of Chinese house churches

Time: Late October 2018

Location: Somewhere in South Korea and Beijing

Questionnaire: How have Chinese house churches been persecuted by the [Chinese] political power and what are the consequences?

II. Number of participants: 17 people

Location of churches they attend:

[Christians who attend churches] located in cities: 15

[Christians who attend churches] located in rural areas: 2

Identity:

Preachers: 4

Elders: 2

Deacons: 1

Volunteers: 9

Ordinary believers: 1

III. Number of churches with which the government has directly meddled: 9

Meddling methods include:

Required to stop gathering: 2

Required to register at a Three-Self Church: 9

Required to move: 2

Required to install surveillance cameras: 1

Required to report on a regular basis: 3

Preachers, fellow workers, lay believers who have been warned or threatened verbally or in writing: 4

IV. Number of churches indirectly harassed by the government: 15

Meddling methods include:

Landlords of the fellowship venue who were required to break the lease: 4

Congregants who were fired because of their faith: 1

Landlords of the pastors' or congregant's personal apartment who were required to break the lease: 2

Congregants who were warned by their employer because of their faith: 3

Pastors and congregants who were stressed out because of prevalent persecution: 11

V. Number of churches affected by the current situation: 12

Effects include:

Fellowships stopped: None

Moved: 4

Dispersed fellowships: 7

Churches that had to change the worship form: 1

Churches that had to cut down the number of weekly gatherings: 2

Churches with decreased numbers of people attending worship: 3

Cancelled or reduced outreach evangelical events: 3

Reduced interactions with other churches: 4

VI. Analysis

First, 57% of churches have been directly harassed and 88% indirectly, which indicates that there is massive persecution.

Second, all nine churches that were directly harassed were required to join Three-Self Churches, which suggests that the purpose of persecution is to merge house churches and Three-Self Churches.

Third, the obvious effect of indirect harassment is mental stress (73%), which implies that threatening is the primary tool used in persecution.

Fourth, none of the churches participating in the questionnaire stopped gathering because of persecution (including Zion Church in Beijing), which demonstrates that Chinese house churches are steadfast to keep the faith.

Fifth, the biggest effect on churches has breaking up the whole into parts, so churches need to be prepared for it (for instance, churches should foster lay believers' leadership skills so that they could shepherd and pastor small groups).

Please pray for Chinese house churches.

The biography of Pastor Liu Tongsu: Liu Tongsu is from Nanjing. He attended Yale University Law School in 1991. He was a legal studies researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, engaging in research on the legal philosophy of the West before studying in the U.S. He converted to Christianity while studying in the U.S. and attended Yale Seminary from 1993-1997. He planted and pastored churches in Connecticut, New York, and San Francisco. Also, he served on the editorial board of Life Quarterly and other magazines and has authored multiple articles and books about Christian faith and theology. Pastor Liu has been passionate about the development and growth of house churches and has been the keynote speaker in many evangelistic meetings, Bible conferences, and discipleship trainings held across the world. Pastor Liu was the lead pastor of Mountain View Chinese Christian Church in California, America, from January 2009-August 2018.