

***"The God who upholds the persecuted
is the same God who upholds all of
His children in their time of need."***

~ Glenn Penner, author of
"In the Shadow of the Cross"

CHINA: Demolition & Detention on Easter Sunday

Sources: China Aid, Church in Chains, Radio Free Asia, International Christian Concern

The Donghu Church in Xining has stood firm in the face of opposition for years. Even though it was officially approved by the Chinese authorities in 2003, this church of more than 300 members has faced problems for years.

In December 2017, the fire department closed the building, citing an unspecified "hidden danger." Following this, the congregation purchased a new building but it was not approved. So the members began meeting in the Donghu Hotel instead. This was also opposed and, in December 2019, the fire department sealed the door. This did not stop the members, who climbed through a window of the church building to resume meeting together. On Christmas Day, however, the electrical power was cut off in the middle of the service and authorities told them the building would be demolished. For more details, see [this report](#).



Donghu Church
Photo: ChinaAid

On Easter Sunday morning, officials carried through on their threats. The building was completely torn down by construction crews. In response, some of these Christians encouraged one another by saying that even though the government could destroy the building, it could never destroy the faith within their hearts.

Easter Sunday was a time of trouble for another church. For the Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu, worship has taken on many forms since being raided by governing officials in December 2018. As a result of the coordinated attacks, dozens of congregants were arrested and several are now serving prison sentences – including Pastor Wang Yi, who was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment.

The church members have sought other ways to meet for worship, including outdoor services and online options. On Easter Sunday, however, a group of believers were meeting online through Zoom when some of the participants suddenly heard nothing, followed by sounds of a disagreement. At least eight people were taken into custody from various homes as a result of a coordinated raid. While most were released after giving statements, others remain under investigation.

For more details on the challenges being experienced by the Donghu Church, the Early Rain Church and others in China, go to our [country report](#).

As the members of these affected churches face uncertain times in the days to come, please pray that they will experience the blessed assurance and peace that comes with knowing their lives are in the hands of the "Living God." While worshipping freely in the privacy of our own homes during this time of social isolation, may we become even more mindful of those who have been trying to do likewise for so much longer. May these Chinese believers also find safe and secure ways of meeting together for needed worship and fellowship. Pray that the opposing Chinese officials will personally realize the truth of the Gospel they are opposing so that they too will come to faith in Christ and share the "Good News" of His salvation.

LAOS: Arrested for Leading Worship

Source: Vision Beyond Borders



Early this year, Sithong Theppavong started a small church in Savannakhet Province by meeting for worship in a farming area. However, he has since encountered opposition and received warnings several times to cease his ministry. Each time he has refused.

On March 15th, authorities approached him, mandating he sign an agreement to desist. When he refused, Sithong was arrested. At last report, he remains in detention and is not allowed any visitation. No further information about Sithong's case, nor any news of his well-being, has been released. There are concerns that he could become a victim of "enforced disappearance." For more about persecution in Laos, visit our [country report](#).

Please pray for God's divine protection over Sithong, and other Christians in Laos who are at risk of punishment or other forms of persecution for their endeavours to provide needed ministry in various communities. Ask the Lord to also bring comfort and encouragement to Sithong's family and friends, as they anxiously await news of their loved one. May information be made available to them about his whereabouts, and eventual contact with Sithong be made, while praying for His hopeful release from custody.

REPORT UPDATE

IRAN: Sentence for Mary Mohammadi

Sources: Middle East Concern, International Christian Concern, Article 18

Fatemeh (Mary) Mohammadi is a Christian convert and blogger who has spoken out about the oppression facing Iran's people. As a result, she has been arrested and imprisoned because of her faith and work as a social media advocate ([read more](#)).

A hearing was held on April 14th, at which time a judge raised questions about her faith, even though it had no bearing on the charges she faced. On April 21st, she was notified of the outcome: one day in prison, a three-month suspension of her prison sentence, plus ten lashes for "disturbing public order." Shortly after the receiving the news, Mary commented in her Instagram account why she was convicted:

"...because of protesting against the slaughter of human beings, because of showing sympathy for the families of those who perished in the Ukraine airline crash, because of defending the rights of all humans, because.... There was no evidence against me, so I ought to have been acquitted, but instead I was sentenced not only to imprisonment, but also flogging."

Mary, who has since her arrest encountered abusive treatment while in prison, is opting not to appeal the verdict. She explains the reason for this by stating, "We have refrained from appealing against the verdict because the appeal courts have turned into 'confirmation' courts!"

Ask God for His swift intervention on Mary's behalf by providing her needed protection and bringing conviction to the judicial authorities for oppressing those who take a stand by justly advocating on behalf of others. Intercede for the many Iranians who are dissatisfied with their oppressive government, and yet are at risk of heavy-handed judgement themselves if their concerns are raised. In the midst of this oppressive spiritual climate, may the growth of Christianity continue to flourish as Christian programs are being broadcast into Iran via the Internet and satellite television.

If you would like to post a prayer of praise or petition on behalf of our persecuted family around the globe, visit [VOMC's prayer wall](#).



Fatemeh (Mary) Mohammadi
Photo: Middle East Concern

The Persecution & Prayer Alert is a ministry of:
The Voice of the Martyrs Canada, P.O. Box 608, Streetsville, Ontario, L5M 2C1
Tel. (905) 670-9721 Website: www.vomcanada.com

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