

"I only began to love the Lord passionately after you arrested me. When the shackles wore out my feet, I realized a little bit how much Christ had paid for me."
 ~ A Linfen church member, speaking to the police

INDIA: Christian Leader Facing Trial

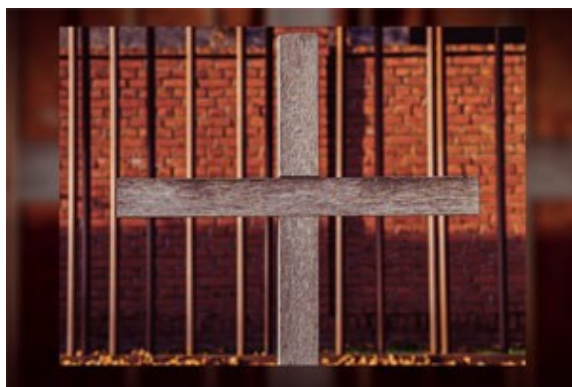
Sources: VOMC International Ministry contacts, Mission Network News

"Brother B," a leader of more than 30 churches and fellowships in northeastern India, serves as a program director for one of VOMC's International Ministry partners. VOMC recently received a report informing that the trial of this Christian ministry leader, who has been imprisoned since mid-October, was finally scheduled to take place this week.

Since the court had been awaiting a police report, the trial was delayed multiple times. According to the ministry leader's family members, the police were unable to find any evidence to support the accusations against "Brother B." (A lack of substantial evidence was the primary factor in the court delays.) At last report, the trial was set to take place on November 28th; however, we have yet to receive information regarding the outcome.

The mounting challenges experienced by religious minorities in India make it very difficult for believers to reach out to those residing in their communities who are desperately in need of humanitarian help and hope. Representatives from 21 countries, along with human rights groups, have recently issued calls for India's governing officials to improve religious freedoms within the country. In particular, critics have raised concerns over the increase in violence, hate speech and anti-conversion laws that are targeting vulnerable minority groups. For more information on the persecution of our Christian brothers and sisters in India, go to our [country report](#).

Remember to lift up "Brother B" in your prayers, asking the Lord to give him peace and strength as he now deals with the outcome of the recent trial. Pray that if any charges have been made against him, they will be dropped and that he will be permitted to continue his ministry activities without hindrance or further threat of arrest and imprisonment. Please also prayerfully uphold other Christians throughout India who are experiencing oppression – whether it be from their families, community members, local authorities and/or officials of the state.



REPORT UPDATES

CHINA: Church and Associated School Officially Closed

Sources: ChinaAid, Church in Chains

The Linfen Covenant House Church has experienced ongoing legal challenges, many of which arose after police officers raided a family camp in August 2022. Two preachers from the church were arrested for alleged fraud and, more recently, two other church workers were suddenly detained without notice (see [this page](#) for more information).

On November 16th, the Linfen City Yaodu District Bureau of Civil Affairs officially announced on their website that the church has been shut down, along with the Asilan School, which was run by the church. The announcement further stated that the church and school were not registered with the government and thus all their activities were considered illegal.

On November 23rd, lawyers met with two of the detained church workers, Wang Qiang and Wu Tingting. While Wang has undergone torture from the authorities, in their attempt to extract a confession, the



Inside the Linfen Covenant House Church.
 Photo: ChinaAid

Christian refused to relent. The next day, as the city was put under another COVID lockdown, the representing lawyers have been prohibited from conducting any further meetings with the two believers.

In the midst of this ongoing persecution, the testimony expressed by a member of the church is that of joy. During a recent raid, a police officer asked her, "When did you start loving the Lord passionately?" This Christian sister answered: "I only began to love the Lord passionately after you arrested me. When the shackles wore out my feet, I realized a little bit how much Christ had paid for me."

Praise God for the testimonies of joy and gratitude that have been expressed by members of the Linfen church during this time of difficulty. As these faithful believers diligently seek the Lord's wisdom and guidance regarding their legal situation, and how to best proceed in ministry, may they continue to sense His reassuring presence every step along the way. Please pray for the encouragement of churches throughout China that are likewise being subjected to pressure due to the increased crackdowns mandated by the Chinese Communist Party. Despite the opposition, may the Gospel message continue to spread across the nation, to the extent of also reaching China's officials at every level of governance.

EGYPT: More Church Buildings Licenced

Sources: Watani, Barnabas Fund

While the Egyptian government formed a committee in September 2016 to work through 3,730 applications to legalize unlicensed church buildings, the process has been slow. When VOMC last reported on the situation in September 2021, there were still 1,772 applications remaining (see [this page](#)). On November 14th, the most recent batch of approvals was made public, announcing the official licencing of 125 churches and other buildings affiliated with Christian ministry. With these latest authorizations, 2,526 of the 3,730 applications have now been approved.

While the registration process in recent years has been long and tedious, some observers perceive a changing attitude towards Christianity in Egypt. As reported in an editorial from Barnabas Fund, several Egyptian followers of Jesus state that their situation is now better than it has been in living memory. In fact, some have welcomed the safety measures brought in through the licencing process. "We are very thankful for the care being shown to our community by the cabinet committee and we are working closely with them to ensure that all the legalized churches are safe for worshippers and those who live around them," states one church leader.

Regrettably, not all Egyptians support the increasing freedoms being granted to the Christian members of society, and so persecution does continue. To review past reports addressing the challenges of Christians in Egypt, go to our [country report](#).

Praise God for the ongoing changes that have been implemented over recent years to improve the treatment of Christians in Egypt, even though the progress made thus far has been slow and steady. As a result, may relations between Christians and Muslims in local areas improve considerably as well, and may leaders representing the country's various levels of government continue to take positive measures for the promotion of peace and equality. Finally, pray that the approval process of the remaining church applications will be streamlined to prevent any further unnecessary delays.



A church in Egypt.
Photo: VOMC