



# CRY FREEDOM

A CAMPAIGN BY CSW

## PRAY FOR CHINA

***The Chinese constitution states that citizens, 'enjoy freedom of religious belief', but in practice religion comes under strict government control in many areas.***

Five official religions are allowed (Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism) and the official bodies for each are carefully regulated and face restrictions. Penalties are often imposed upon those who practice their faith outside these entities.

The cost of practising religion outside government-sanctioned bodies includes discrimination, fines, confiscation and destruction of property, arrest, torture, imprisonment and forced labour and, in some cases, execution. Groups practising different religions are affected in varying ways.

Chinese law permits official, registered churches to function. The government sanctioned Protestant Church is known as the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM). The Catholic equivalent is the Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA). TSPM and CPA churches face restrictions on selection and training of clergy; appointment of bishops; location of venues; publication of literature; finances and relationships with religious groups abroad. There are also restrictions on working with certain groups, including those under eighteen. As a result of the control exercised by the atheistic government, most Christians in China choose to worship in unregistered churches.

Unregistered churches are less likely to have a building and often meet in homes. This has led to the use of the term 'house churches' to describe unregistered 'underground' protestant groups. There is also an underground Roman Catholic Church who align with Rome. In some areas unregistered congregations meet freely without harassment from authorities. In other areas Christians have been harassed, humiliated, fined, tortured, imprisoned and subjected to forced labour.

## PLEASE PRAY:

- ▶ *For Chinese people of all faiths to have true religious freedom. Pray that they would have the right, not only to believe, but also to practise their faith through worship and meeting together, as well as the right to share their faith with others.*
- ▶ *For all those who suffer due to lack of religious freedom in China.*
- ▶ *For house church leaders who are harassed, Roman Catholic Bishops who are in hiding, Falun Gong practitioners who are being tortured in prison and Uyghur Muslims who suffer discrimination. Pray that their right to their beliefs would be respected.*
- ▶ *Pray for the government in China, that they would acknowledge and allow Christians to be a positive part of the harmonious society it aims to build.*