

Chinese Government Reports More Believers in China Than Expected

The number of Christians in China have more than doubled since 2005.



For many years, Christian organizations have reported that the Chinese are rapidly converting to Christianity, despite government restrictions on religious freedom. A recent Chinese government-sponsored survey on religious beliefs lends credence to claims, reporting a larger number of Chinese Christians than previously thought. Although the poll estimates are lower than the 80 million to 130 million Christians that Chinese ministries claim, the poll reported 40 million Christians in China, more than double 2005's official figure of 16 million. Conducted by professors from East China Normal University in Shanghai, the poll found 300 million religious adherents in China overall, three times the government's previous estimate. About 200 million were Buddhists, Taoists or worshipers of traditional gods, the BBC reported. Christianity and Catholicism, which were tracked separately, and Islam were China's other leading religions. Some researchers say the poll's findings may be a sign that the Chinese are searching for new values to replace the nation's communist ideology, the *Washington Post* reported. "More Chinese feel unstable and harassed by the rootless lives they lead now," Liu Zhongyu, a philosophy professor who helped organize the survey, told the *Post*. "People don't trust each other anymore. They are looking for something to anchor their lives in."