

Things Are Worse Than We Imagined in China

Earlier this week, I met with some Christian friends who have lived and worked in China for many years. What they shared with me was chilling and sobering. (They are well-connected and not simply airing personal opinions.)

First, the crackdown against Christian believers in the country (not to mention the crackdown against Muslims and others, which we did not discuss in detail), is getting increasingly severe.

Just a few years ago, there were real signs of change. Persecution was lessening, and liberties were increasing. But not today.

There is a systematic attempt to purge the gospel from the nation.

Even the national, Three-Self churches, in which there were some real, gospel-preaching pastors, are now virtually bereft of such leaders. And it is true that the Communist Party is rewriting the Bible to make it suitable for its purposes. This, then, would be the Bible used in these government-run churches. Talk about an utterly blasphemous act.

As for the underground churches, the crackdown against them is intensifying.

My friends have Chinese colleagues whose family members have received life sentences because of their faith.

Arrests, brutal interrogations, imprisonments, disruption of meetings, beatings, destroying of "unauthorized" Bible and Christian books are increasingly common. In one instance that was shared with me, those owning non-approved Bibles and other

resources were hit with “stiff fines and the books earmarked for destruction. But not before they (the materials) were first dumped in piles on the street before they were carted off ... followed by the pastor, who was then sent to prison.”

To be sure, much of this has been known for some time now, and I myself have written about it, most recently, last September. But, to repeat, the persecution is increasing, and it is chilling to hear about it firsthand.

Second, President Xi really does have megalomaniacal plans. By removing presidential term limits, he is setting himself up to be emperor for life (as my friends couched it).

Not only so, but I was told that the government, from top to bottom, seems to be in lockstep with him (in particular, when it comes to persecuting Christians).

In the past, Beijing might say one thing and a local province would do another. Today, I was informed, that is not the case. The cooperation and harmony are deep.

Third, while the Chinese people may have enjoyed having more liberties, they are more concerned with a healthy economy. And since more and more Chinese have more and more money, they don't mind the crackdowns on their liberties, which include greater monitoring of their day to day lives.

Not only so, but the government is now regulating what days certain factories can run and having more say about certain cars on the road, which is leading to less pollution and more blue skies.

Simply stated, as the people have more money in their pockets and more blue skies over their heads, they are all the more supportive of President Xi. In fact, my friend felt that if China went to war, people would enlist in the army en masse.

Fourth, my friends believe that China is increasingly becoming

the antagonist in the world today, and they stated plainly that someone needed to stand up to China's aggression.

When I asked if President Trump could be that person, they replied, "The Chinese liked Obama but didn't respect him. They don't like Trump, but they do respect him."

Right now, Trump is standing up to China when it comes to trade, and it appears he has no intention of backing down. (I am not an economist, so I'll limit my comments to this one sentence, not knowing the ins and outs of his strategy.)

But I also know the president has people close to him who inform him about the persecution of Christians in countries like China and India, and perhaps here too, Trump could take a stand. Would it help, especially if tied in with financial sanctions?

Perhaps.

But at the least, it would send a loud message and get the ball of resistance rolling. Perhaps other nations would then follow America's example.

But all that is speculation.

The reality is that a very powerful, very dangerous China is rising on our watch, one that is capable of destroying many millions of lives.

Let us pray for God to stand in judgment over China's tyranny, to humble or remove President Xi, and to help His persecuted church.

And let us encourage our government to do whatever it can to push back against China's evil intentions.