

What If the Bible Was Outlawed in America?

For believers in China, persecution and oppression aren't abstract ideas to be debated; they are reality.

That lived experience for Christians in the People's Republic of China – an unabashedly communist nation – served as a muse for actor Brett Varvel, who stars in and directs “Disciples in the Moonlight,” a film set in the American midwest and exploring what it might look like if Christianity and the Bible were outlawed in the United States.

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To understand the crux of Varvel's movie, though, viewers need to grasp what's happening to Christians in China.

The evangelization of China was on the rise in the late 20th century, though there's evidence from the Pew Research Center suggesting it has since slowed. Nevertheless, the CCP, alarmed by the number of Christians in the country, seemingly – and heretically – took to heart the old adage, “If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.”

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As CBN News has reported, Chinese President Xi Jinping's regime has, in addition to destroying church buildings and arresting ministers, undertaken a decade-long

process to sinicize the Bible, that is, to infuse it with communist propaganda and recast Jesus as a murderer and sinner.

For example, it reimagines the story of the woman caught in adultery in John 8:1-11. In the New Testament passage, the religious leaders bring to Jesus a woman who has sinned. In response, He tells the crowd only those who are without sin can stone her. One by one, the men walk away, leaving Jesus alone with the adulterous woman. He then forgives her and tells her to "sin no more."

But in the CCP-edited version of that passage, it states:

Jesus once said to the angry crowd who was trying to stone a woman who had sinned, "He who is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her." When his words came to their ears, they stopped moving forward. When everyone went out, Jesus stoned the woman himself, and said, "I am also a sinner."

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Varvel's film, now streaming on Angel, draws heavily on that sinister reality.

"It's not just that the Bible has been outlawed," Varvel said on CBN's "Faith in Culture." "But it has been changed, and all the offensive language has been taken out, a government-sanctioned, approved text has now been distributed, and you basically now turn in your copy of the Bible for what we call [in the movie] the 'Enlightened Truth Bible.'"

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