

Are U.S. Christian Leaders Too Quiet About China's Persecuted?

Human Rights attorney and Christian Gao Zhisheng received media attention for his torture and re-disappearance last year. His whereabouts are still unknown.

Dr. Fan Yafeng was violently arrested for speaking with National Public Radio (NPR) On November 24, 2010. He endured nine days of torture. He is presently under house arrest and prevented from communicating with the outside world.

Christian groups don't feel that these and other issues are spurring the Church to take enough action to stop the abuse. International Christian Concern (ICC) recently met with three leading Chinese Christian human rights activists who reported that the persecuted Church there is facing increased persecution. The church there is desperate for vocal support from churches and denominations.

One House Church leader in China said, "The American church has not spoken up. We have been waiting for their support, but we have heard nothing." Another told ICC, "There are many cases of persecution that we are aware of. It is definitely on the increase, yet the American Church has said nothing."

Some high-profile cases, like Zhisheng and Yafeng, have made American newspapers, but there has been no condemning statements released from major church organizations or leaders in the U.S., according to ChinaAid.

"These are the kind of major cases that the American church and its leaders need to speak out against. We need the Franklin Grahams and the Rick Warrens of our country to stop visiting official Chinese leadership and instead speak out on

behalf of their oppressed brothers and sisters,” says Bob Fu, President of ChinaAid Association. “In early 2010 we worked with a U.S. Congressman to send 200 letters to media and Christian leaders asking them to speak out on behalf of persecuted Christians. We got responses from no one. When we followed up, we only heard one reply from someone saying they would ‘pray for us.’”

Fu went on to say that many Christians unwittingly support the wrong side, falsely believing the official State-sponsored church represents Chinese Christians: “The majority of Chinese Christians are in the illegal house church network, not in the Three-Self, government-run churches.”

One house church leader put it this way: “American Christian leaders are more afraid of the Chinese government than we are. The American church has not spoken up. We have been waiting for their support, but we have heard nothing.”

“When I ask underground church leaders what they need most, they don’t ask for money. They ask for prayer and vocal support from Western Christian denominations and leaders that puts pressure on the Chinese government,” says Logan Maurer, ICC’s regional manager. “Please contact Christian leaders, and your denomination to make sure they are aware of what is actually happening in China and urge them to use their platform to protect religious and human rights in China.”