

Chinese Government Tells Churches to Worship the Communist Party or Be Closed

In its continuing effort to remove Christianity from the country, the Chinese government is turning churches into propaganda centers for the regime.

The magazine Bitter Winter reports the government's religious affairs department of Putian spent around \$75,000 last month to turn the first floor of the Three-Self Church located in the Xiuyu district's Daitou town into a publicity center to promote the Communist Party and its leaders.

The display inside the church is titled "Civilization Practice Station for a New Era." The communist government's goal is to transform believers into good party members through education.

Over the last two years, the Chinese government has established these civilian practice stations across the country to impose communist dogma on its citizens. These stations are often installed in churches and other religious venues that have been taken over by the government.

Earlier this month, more than 100 government officials attended the civilization station's opening inside the Three-Self Church. The display included 168 posters about Mao Zedong, Xi Jinping and China's other past and present communist leaders.

The church's pastor was forced to include stories about Mao Zedong in his sermon that day, according to Bitter Winter.

"We do not dare to refuse these propaganda materials for fear that the government will ban our gatherings," a church member said helplessly. "We're powerless to challenge them."

A photograph published by Bitter Winter shows a portrait of President Xi Jinping hanging prominently in the sanctuary of the church, along with a pair of China's national flags. Other photos showed books by Xi and other Communist Party materials displayed inside the church. If a church refuses to display Xi's photograph during its worship services, it could be closed.

"I had to agree to this, fearing that we will lose our venue," the preacher explained. {eoa}

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