

Chinese House Church Leaders Released From Labor Camps

After two years of grueling labor, five house church leaders were released last week from labor camps in China, reports Voice of the Martyrs.

Since Sept. 13, 2009, Fao Fuqin, Zhao Guoai, Yang Caizhen, Yang Hongzhen and Li Shuangpin have experienced physical and psychological torment in a Chinese labor camp. All five men are leaders in the 50,000 member Linfen church, a house church movement in China.

The men were arrested in the aftermath of an attack on Linfen, when over 400 local police, government officials and hired men attacked one of the church branches. In the attack, they demolished a church building and clashed with several hundred members of the church, sending 30 to the hospital.

Five church leaders were detained and sentenced to prison terms of up to seven years during a one-day show trial, and five were sentenced to two years of re-education through labor.

Police still occupy the site where the main Linfen church building stands. The church's members are scattered, but they continue to meet and worship in private homes.

The five leaders who were recently released have suffered much but now feel strong. "We who have been released express our most sincere gratitude to the brothers and sisters around the world who have been concerned about us and who have helped us. May God remember your prayers and what you did. God is with us all," the five told ChinaAid.

Even though their own freedom is secure, they now plead with Christians around the world to intercede in prayer for the

five other men who remain in prison.

"We sincerely urge all brothers and sisters around the world to pray for Linfen church. ... At the same time, we also ask brothers and sisters to remember in prayer the Linfen leaders who are still suffering in jail," the five told ChinaAid. "May the Lord move the police to release them early so that they can be reunited with their families."

Pray that God would continue to use all ten of these men to spread the gospel throughout China, where the message of Christ continues to pick up speed daily.