

Pastor in Wuhan: Government Officials Aren't Stopping Us From Reaching the Community Anymore

Pastor Huang Lei of Root and Fruit Christian Church in Wuhan says his church has been serving the community throughout the COVID-19 outbreak—and the government isn't stopping them anymore.

In an interview, Pastor Huang, who used to be a surgeon, says his church has been helping the poor and needy for over a decade. They started in 2008 after an earthquake hit Wenchuan County. In 2010, the church started a food bank in Wuhan, which was recognized by the government and offered a legal way to reach the community.

After the coronavirus broke out in Wuhan, Root and Fruit began giving away protective equipment, medical supplies, hand sanitizer and food to hundreds of people.

"I think in times like this, everyone is afraid," Huang says. "Nobody wants to go out of the door. But if there are people who need help, and we see this need as our responsibility, the love of Jesus Christ flows out in this process. We can really help these people. They were very touched."

Huang says that last year, government officials often stopped Root and Fruit from doing many of their Christian activities. But now, he sees very little resistance from the government. In fact, when his church goes out to serve those in the marketplace, they hardly see government officials there anymore.

The only resistance the church has encountered recently was

that officials deleted a video Huang posted for the church in which he called Christians to fast and pray. Officials told him not to encourage people to fast because it could weaken their immune systems.

“And the police have called me a few times, saying we can’t hold meetings, or fast and pray,” Huang says. “I told them the same thing and they understood our situation. He said, yes, we should all pray for Wuhan and they know we’re meeting online. But he said, the higher authorities wouldn’t understand. And that’s it. So I think it’s our right to pray. It’s between us and God. No one can prohibit it. Just as Martin Luther said, God is the only one in charge of the heart. So we are not confined by secular government. This is where we stand.”

Huang also says the pandemic has awakened believers’ hearts to take their relationships with God seriously where they hadn’t before.

“But this outbreak put everyone in this life and death situation,” he says. “In the face of the plague, they suddenly realized the value of life. They realized no matter how much power you have, or how much money you have, you’re still vulnerable to the virus. Material stuff can’t protect you from this. So many of our brethren realized that life is really beyond our grasp. It’s God who’s in charge of it and we are praying to God to keep us safe. So at this point, they’re thinking more and more about the relationship between God who gives us life, the meaning of life and the eternality of our life.”

Watch the full interview in this article.