

Shouwang Church Member Faces Job Dismissal

In a disturbing new development in the 12-week long Shouwang Church clash with Chinese authorities, a church member who is employed by Christian humanitarian group World Vision is facing dismissal for her participation in Shouwang's outdoor worship attempts, ChinaAid reports.

In the 12 weeks since Shouwang Church lost its meeting site and decided to hold its Sunday worship services outdoors, Chinese authorities have tried many different ways to try to get the church members to desist. These have included police detention, house arrest, eviction, loss of jobs, and being escorted out of Beijing and returned to one's hometown.

The World Vision action was just one of at least four new cases in the past week of persecution against a Shouwang Church member.

Police handed over detained Shouwang Church member Chuan Liang to the Shandong Provincial Government, which has escorted him from Beijing to his hometown in coastal Shandong province.

Another Shouwang member who has been a frequent participant in Shouwang's attempts to hold its Sunday worship services at an open-air plaza has been under 24-hour surveillance since last week. His tails are even following him the entire time that he is traveling to and from work. Not only that, government officials have sought out his company CEO and seriously defamed him and threatened the company. His managers worriedly exhorted him to quickly leave Shouwang Church, otherwise his contract would not be extended.

Two women from another Beijing house church, Shuangshu Church, were planning on Sunday morning to head to northwest Beijing's Zhongguancun area to join the Shouwang outdoor worship

service. But to their surprise, police barred them from leaving their home. Soon thereafter, their landlord came to pressure them to move out.

World Vision employee Xia Xiaoqiu has been detained in police custody on many occasions for participating in Shouwang's attempts to hold outdoor Sunday worship services. Apparently under pressure from the government, her employer, the Beijing office of the international Christian group World Vision, has pressured Xia to quit.

Xia wrote on her Google Buzz on Sunday: "With regard to the job, I've already had several rounds of talks with my boss. Each side has already made clear what can be made clear. My boss said that my activities cannot be allowed to impact the organization's development [in China], and those in the managerial level are all in agreement about this. The only thing left now is to await their decision. I'm thinking that no matter what, I must do my part to the utmost, so even if I do have to leave, I'll make sure there's a smooth transition to my successor."

In response to the continuous violations of the lawful rights of its members, Shouwang Church on May 12 released its "Statement on the Infringement of the Rights of Citizens of Faith" in which it clearly states, "We will organize legal experts from within our church and set up a legal small group that in the coming days will start collecting the necessary evidence in the cases of citizens of faith being forced to leave their jobs or being evicted because of their religious belief.

"In order to promote the establishment of a Chinese society ruled by law, we do not rule out the possibility, if the circumstances require, of holding legally responsible for violating the law the related individuals or departments who infringed upon the basic rights of these citizens of faith ... which will advance Chinese society becoming a society ruled by

law.”

Last week, Shouwang Church’s Governing Committee decided to have the legal small group start its work, formally establishing the group to help those brothers and sisters whose rights have been violated. ChinaAid calls on all Christians and churches to watch these developments closely and to pray on behalf of the Shouwang members.

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