

Chinese Government Might Be Lightening Its Persecution of Christians During COVID-19 Crisis

Dennis Balcombe says COVID-19 is finally beginning to slope downward in China. In fact, most new cases of the coronavirus are from people coming from other countries who are unwittingly bringing the virus back into China. And although the virus has killed thousands of people, Dennis says God is still bringing something good out of this evil—Christian persecution in China is perhaps decreasing.

It's well-known that for decades, China has cracked down on churches, inhibiting Christians from preaching the gospel without having express government approval of their theology. But that might be beginning to change as Christians respond with love and hope during the coronavirus crisis.

You may remember that I interviewed Dennis, who is a missionary in Hong Kong, back in February, when the virus was just starting to gain traction in the U.S. He wrote an article that we published on Charisma News, where he described how Christians were boldly responding to the virus outbreak.

Many churches were giving away free face masks and hand sanitizer. Many who were sick came to church for prayer and healing, and many others were saved as a result!

I recently interviewed Dennis again to get an update on the state of the church in China as the COVID-19 cases are going down. He also wrote a powerful article that we posted on Charisma News.

“For all the years that communism has been in China, there

have been tremendous restrictions on all religion, especially Christianity," Dennis says. "But just in the last couple of weeks, we're hearing from many different places that they're not monitoring churches and they're not cracking down as before.

"Now, one theory is that they're just too busy dealing with the coronavirus to be involved. Another theory is that there are some people in the government who realize that Christians can pray and they can help people. And the Christians are actually helping people. So at the present time, some churches actually are doing evangelism, social work, giving the people face masks and praying for the people with very little interference. So this seems to be the good thing. It seems like at least in the last few weeks, the pressure on the churches really is declining a lot."

Despite the deaths, the infections and the economic struggles, Dennis sees a lot of good coming from this virus outbreak. One thing he's seeing in Hong Kong is people who are afraid coming to Christians asking for prayer.

He says that Hong Kong is different from China in that instead of being bound by communism, they actually struggle with a lot of materialism.

"Money is the god that they worship here [in Hong Kong]," he says. "Now what we're doing is we're going out on the street, people have given us face masks and disinfectant and we put a sign, 'this is a prayer station.' So people are coming in all around the area, saying, 'Can you pray for me?' and then we talk with the people and pray for them. And of course, some Christians receive words of knowledge and [have] gifts of healing other people on the street, you know, so actually, this has been a great thing for the gospel."

And although the economy is hurting a lot of people and putting them out of work as businesses shut down, Dennis

points out that Jesus came to save souls—not make people wealthy.

“So we are actually seeing an increase in unity in the church and prayer, worship and evangelism,” he says. “It’s sad that people have died, but at the same time many people are now finding eternal life and are going to go to heaven.”

I’m so encouraged by this report Dennis offers. He also gives an encouragement for those in the United States who are struggling with fear about the coronavirus: “The Lord says, ‘Don’t be fearful.’ This is the time maybe to get more in prayer and worship and reading the Word of the Lord. And if you can’t do it with other people, you can maybe do it through a social program like Zoom or something like that. And we need to encourage one another. We need to keep in contact, but not close physical contact.”

Be sure to listen to my full interview with Dennis. You’ll find his heart for God and his report uplifting, I’m sure. And with all the negative news about the coronavirus floating around right now, Dennis’ insights might be exactly what you need today!