

China Attempts To Curb the Rapid Growth of Christianity

May 02, 2014 | [Christine Pasciuti](#)

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The Christian Church in China is growing by leaps and bounds, capturing the attention of the country's Communist Party leaders, who are alarmed at the rapid rise in sheer numbers of Christ followers.

A [survey by Tea Leaf Nation](#) of the Asian country's social media platform, Weibo, found that Chinese censors are permitting more Christian-themed tweets on the site – a Chinese version of Twitter.

According to a study released last week, this has resulted in more than 18 million mentions of “Jesus” on Weibo versus only 4 million mentions of Chinese President Xi Jinping. State-run newspapers, in contrast, write almost daily about Jinping and rarely ever mention Jesus.

The research also revealed that "Christian congregation" appeared on Weibo more than 41 million times, while "Communist Party" generated just 5.3 million mentions. A search on the site for the word "Bible" yielded 17 million results. Receiving fewer than 60,000 mentions was "Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung," a collection of writings and speeches by former Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong, referred to by the West as "The Little Red Book."

To stymie the rampant growth and explosion of popularity for the Christian faith in China, particularly in the eastern province of Zhejiang, Communist officials are reportedly waging a “demolition campaign” against churches in the country's most Christian regions by ordering a dozen to be destroyed, though these plans have been denied by Chinese leaders.

Feng Zhili, chairman of Zhejiang's ethnic and religious affairs committee, said in a recent speech that Christianity's growth has been “too excessive and too haphazard,” hinting at Communist Party discomfort with the rapid growth of Christian congregations in what is already considered China's most Christian region.

Wenzhou, a rich port city that houses a large Christian community, is considered to be the “Jerusalem of the East,” with estimates of over one million practicing Protestants living among Wenzhou's nine million residents. Activists assert that churches in Zhejiang are currently facing either demolition or having their crosses removed. Demands have reportedly been made on other churches to appear “less conspicuous” by turning their lights off at night.

Last week, thousands of Christians gathered in solidarity to form a “human shield” around Sanjiang Church in Wenzhou as demolition was announced for that structure due to "unsafe" building codes. Despite attempts to stop the government it has gone ahead with the demolition and pictures posted online show various parts of the church structure now being torn down. The demolition of Sanjiang church will “definitely further erode the little remaining trust between millions of Chinese Christians and the Chinese government,” commented Mr Fu, president of the Texas-based group China Aid.

As Communist government leaders continue to exercise their muscle in an attempt to hinder the growth of churches they view as a threat, frequently cited “charges” are made by Chinese officials ordering church demolitions, including...

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