



Christian Freedom® International

December 2022



Christian child in a shelter shows his toy. His family is hiding from Islamist extremists.

Dear Friend:

This Christmas, there are little children who are hiding.

They are not playing hide-and-seek. They are hiding from angry forces intent on snuffing out the light of Christ in this world.

It is hard to imagine especially as we celebrate Jesus coming to us as a baby. Yet right now innocent children are hiding in safe houses because they are Christian.

Recently I met dozens of them. Despite their dangerous circumstances, they cheerfully welcomed me. Some had escaped violent mobs. Others may be seized at any time by hostile officials.

It is important that you know their stories so that you can pray and encourage them. *We included a card for you to send and bless a persecuted child.*

Would Anyone Persecute a Child?

First, here is a sobering question as we celebrate Jesus this Christmas: When did the enemy first try to kill Him? *When did Jesus first experience persecution?*

Matthew tells us an angel warned Joseph to "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

If Jesus had to hide from persecutors when He was a small child . . . would Christian children today be threatened by persecution?

Well, here are a few that I met – and you are helping.

Hiding from Mobs

My phone pinged with encrypted messages from our co-worker:

"I am sorry to inform you that another converted believer was arrested on the charge of 'blasphemy'. At this moment hundreds of fanatic Muslims are attacking his family and vandalizing his house. His wife called us to save them." The police were looking for his wife to arrest her.

What was his crime? He is accused of blasphemy – maliciously insulting or offending religious beliefs – for posting innocent comments on Facebook. Islamist activists search for Christian converts to terrorize and force to return to Islam.

Our co-workers quickly rescued the mother and two little boys and arranged a safe house. Months later, the family is still there as the father languishes in jail.

When I visited, we sat on their mattress on the floor. One boy proudly opened a tiny cardboard box of treasures. He cheerfully pulled out a broken straw and other items he cleverly made into toys. His brother with autism quietly looked on.

They rarely leave the shelter. Mom keeps up on their schooling as she cares for them and cooks for others in the shelter.

No one knows how long their father will be in jail – or what will happen if he is released. In jail he faces abuse from inmates and suffers from medical issues. If he is released, extremists may attack them.

We retained several attorneys. It's challenging because local lawyers are afraid of Muslim militants. They could face violence or boycotts for representing him.

Pray for this family. Pray for the children to be supernaturally strengthened through this ordeal – and to get their father back safely.

With your kind gifts, Christian Freedom International is providing housing, legal aid, medical support, food and other necessities for this family and others.

An Underground Chinese Church . . . In Exile

Pastor Pan tapped out a message on his phone. An app translated it from Chinese to English. Smiling, he lifted his phone for me to read: "We love our children."

I met his church in their hiding place. The tight-knit, loving congregation laughed as they tested their English and shared their food with me.

Their underground church of 60 adults and kids escaped China three years ago. Yet they – and the babies born since – could be forced back at any moment.

Nicknamed the Mayflower Church, Shenzhen Holy Reformed Church faced severe persecution for following Christ. Like the Pilgrims, these Chinese believers left everything behind in their homeland in search of a place to freely live their faith.

"We left China at God's leading," Pastor Pan said. Why? "For religious freedom and the education of our children. We do not want our children taught atheism."

They are serious about their children's education. In China, the church ran a school. In the shelter, parents teach classes, emphasizing the Bible. In one family's room, I spotted a small boy studying the Heidelberg Catechism.

Since 2018, China has escalated its crack-down on Christians. Pastors are arrested, sometimes in the middle of services. One pastor was sentenced to five years for trying to print "illegal publications" – the Bible. Bible texts are reinterpreted to fit Chinese communist propaganda.

Capturing the hearts and minds of Chinese youth is essential to the communists' plan. Children are banned from attending church. Parents are banned from teaching religion to their children. China's Compulsory Education Law makes homeschooling or private unregistered schools illegal.

When Christians in an impoverished region were told to replace pictures of Jesus with posters of Xi Jinping, a communist party chairman said, "They think God is their savior. After our cadres' work, they'll realize their mistakes and think, we should no longer rely on Jesus, but on the party for help."

Christian leaders have responded by signing a Declaration stating that they respect authority, but their allegiance is to Jesus Christ.

After Pastor Pan signed the Declaration, officials raided his church and destroyed their school. The congregation took a vote and decided to leave.

But even outside of China, they are not safe.

Chinese agents stalked and filmed church leaders when they met with UN officials and journalists. Chinese officials call church members saying they betrayed their country and must return home. Family members in China are harassed.

Other dissidents have been kidnapped and returned to China to be punished.

The pressure takes a toll on the little ones. I saw one child with patches of hair. His mother said, when it fell out, he tearfully asked, "Mommy, am I ugly?"

It hurts to think of what will happen if they are forced back to China.

As I write, at any moment the situation may change. They may be captured and returned to China. Or – God willing – they will get asylum in a free country.

One thing is certain . . . they need our prayers and encouragement!

One mother is pregnant with twins . . . and was worried. "The delivery will be expensive," she said.

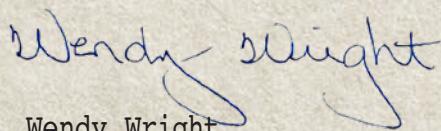
With your support, Christian Freedom International pre-paid the medical bills for the twins' delivery. We are also helping with housing, food, and daily needs for the church – and working to get them to a safe country.

Thank you for making it possible to act immediately to urgent needs!

When I met him, that little boy's hair was growing back. Delighted, he had asked, "Mommy, am I handsome?" *Pray for divine protection for these children.*

Thank you for joining with us to serve persecuted Christians.

Have a blessed and Merry Christmas!



Wendy Wright
President

P.S. This Christmas, we can love Christian children who are hiding in safe houses – and others who face persecution.

Enclosed is a card for you. Sign and send it to us, and we will get it to a persecuted Christian. Or you can send it to family and friends to educate and encourage them to pray for persecuted Christians.

Thank you for remembering and blessing God's children this Christmas!

“You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.” Psalm 32:7

I pray that God will fill you with peace as you dwell in His secret place.





My encouragement and prayer for you: