

PRISONERS OF faith

Pastor Zhang Country: China

Chinese police detained Pastor Zhang 'Bike' Mingxuan, along with his wife Xie Fenlang and co-pastor Wu Jiang He, at a police station in Hebei after a BBC journalist attempted to interview him on Monday (August 4). International affairs journalist John Simpson phoned Pastor Bike, as he is affectionately known, to request an interview as required in a handbook given to journalists reporting on the Olympic Games in Beijing. Pastor Bike agreed to the interview but as the journalist travelled to meet him, police arrested Bike and his companions. Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials had banished the pastor and his wife from Beijing for the duration of the Games, fearing they would try to meet with visiting foreign officials. After forcing Bike and Xie to leave their home and evicting them from several other temporary residences, police on July 18 entered a guesthouse where they were staying and drove them to Yanjiao in neighboring Hebei province. The couple then moved to another, more remote town to await the completion of the Games.

Last year Release staff and a church team from the UK had the privilege of meeting a number of Chinese house church pastors including Pastor Bike. As they prayed and read God's word together each of them were captivated by his lovely smile. They were challenged by his obvious passion for evangelism, for God and for his beloved China. Pastor Bike is a simple evangelist who has led thousands to faith in Christ. As a church planter and church leader his bold witness has encouraged many of his fellow believers. Pastor Bike moved to Beijing in 1998. He is co-founder and president of the China House Church Alliance, established in April 2005 to defend the rights of house church Christians. In 2005 U.S. President Bush invited Bike to a meeting during an official visit to China. The meeting never took place however, as officials detained him before he could

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EMAIL ALERT
for prayer & action

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attend. As president of the alliance, Pastor Bike in November 2007 sent an open letter to President Hu Jintao, urging China to grant greater religious freedoms. The letter, also signed by his wife, read in part, '*President Hu, are you aware that officials under you, arrest, beat and drive away the Christians from their homes?*' He also mentioned several detentions for his religious activities, including a 185-day imprisonment in 1986, shortly after he became a Christian and numerous threats, beatings and arrests after he moved to Beijing. In 1999 PSB officials seized him for preaching in a public place and confined him to a mental hospital for 13 days. In his conclusion, Bike implored Hu to improve the rights of religious minorities, particularly Christians, for the social and moral benefit of China.

PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ That Wu Jiang, Xie Fenlang and Pastor Zhang would be released without charge
- ▶ For their safety whilst in custody
- ▶ For Christians throughout China and especially for house church leaders who face persecution

'But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him'
Acts 12:5

INTERNATIONAL
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THE VOICE OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Hebrews 13:3 'Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow-prisoners, and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering'

**Please sign the petition to help free arrested house church leader,
Pastor Zhang 'Bike' Mingxuan**

Our sister mission, Voice of the Martyrs USA (VOM) in cooperation with our Chinese partners, China Aid (CAA) have recently launched a campaign to free the house Church Alliance President Pastor Zhang 'Bike' Mingxuan.

'The Chinese Government has continued to step over the bounds of rule of law by not allowing true religious freedom to take place in China,' stated CAA President Bob Fu. 'The Chinese Government's illegal arrest and detainment of a man as selfless and patriotic as Pastor Zhang Mingxuan may have negated any positive strides China had shown to the World during the Olympic Games.'

A website, **www.freepastorbike.com**, has been created that will give those concerned the chance to sign a petition urging the Chinese authorities to release Pastor Bike, his wife and his fellow pastor immediately. For all who pray for Christians in China and who care about the future of the Chinese House Church, we urge you to join this petition and help free Pastor Bike.

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