



Zhou Heng

Country: China

In 2007, Zhou Heng, a prominent Chinese house church leader and Christian businessman in Urumqi, Xinjiang, was arrested and accused of illegal business management. On August 3rd, Zhou received a delivery notice for a batch of 5000 printed Bibles that had been sent to him. As Zhou and a colleague made their way to collect the shipment he was detained without warrant by the Shayibake District Public Security officers (PSB), who were apparently anticipating his arrival. The Bibles he was hoping to collect had reportedly been donated by South Korean churches and were intended for free distribution, rather than sale. But the Chinese authorities only allow officially sanctioned bodies to print and distribute Bibles within China. These controls mean that the present system cannot meet the increasing needs of China's growing numbers of Christians. Zhou, who also runs a Christian bookshop selling legally published literature, now faced the prospect of up to 15 years in jail. His registered bookstore, the Yayi Christian Book Room, was closed following his arrest.

During his arrest officers handcuffed Zhou's hands behind his back. Whilst in custody he was badly beaten and suffered inhumane treatment. He was forced to sleep on the concrete floor for the first month, and was only provided a bed after news of his arrest was reported internationally. Zhou shared a cell with 14 other inmates, who allegedly were directed by the police officers to beat him in an attempt to make him testify against himself, which he refused to do.

In February, a court in Urumqi decided not to proceed with the charges due to insufficient evidence and he was freed. In early April the good news of Zhou Heng's release was made public and he is now at home together with his wife and two daughters.

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EMAIL ALERT
for prayer & action
APRIL 2008



Zhou Heng reunited with his family

From his home, Zhou expressed his thanks to all who prayed for him,

'I thank you for the love and the help you offered for my family. I'm proud of you. It also reminds me of something Lord Jesus says, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, ... I was in prison and you came to visit me ... I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. I am now recuperating at home. Although I am still physically weak, my heart is filled with peace and light from the Holy Spirit. Let us, in Christ, continue to focus on Father's kingdom and righteousness. Let us thank, praise and worship the great almighty and loving God. Your brother and friend Zhou Heng

PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ Thank God for Zhou Heng's release
- ▶ For God's protection and direction with regard to brother Zhou's future ministry
- ▶ That the family will continue to know God's grace, provision and wisdom

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

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