

# CHINA: Police summon Wenzhou pastor after his release on bail

China Aid (17.02.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2moRWbU> – The pastor of a house church in China's coastal Zhejiang province feared he may be re-arrested when he responded to a police summons on the morning of Feb. 3.

After Huang Yizi, the pastor of Fengwo Church, was released on bail a year ago, he expressed his concern that he would be taken into custody again, saying, "Please pray for me. I will not return if they want me to do something that contradicts the law, the truth, my belief, or my conscience. If I am really sentenced during the [Lunar] New Year, sisters and brothers [in Christ], please believe that I always have a clear conscience toward God and my fellow men."

At 5 p.m. that day, Huang updated his friends, saying he had been allowed to return home, but the issue the police wanted to address had not yet been solved. However, he did not discuss the contents of their conversation and asked for prayers.

In an interview with a China Aid reporter on Feb. 3, Huang's wife said he had received the summons the night before, and that the police had been summoning him like this since he was bailed out of prison last year. She and several other local Christians believe that he was ordered to come to the police station because Feb. 5 marked the one-year anniversary of his

release. According to Chinese law, if he is found not in violation of bail rules, he may remain free, but, if officials determine that he has violated those precepts, he may subject to arrest.

More than two years ago, officials targeted Salvation Church's cross as a government-endorsed beautification campaign raked across Zhejiang, pegging church buildings and crosses for demolition. When more than 600 of them arrived on the site on July 21, 2014, however, a wall of Christians met them, and conflict erupted as authorities tried to break through. More than 50 church members were injured, with 14 requiring medical attention. To protest this mistreatment, Huang and a group of Christians visited the local government. 10 days later, he was apprehended and charged with "gathering a crowd to assault a state agency." Later, the charge was altered to "gathering a crowd to disturb public order." He was tried on March 24, 2015, and sentenced to one year in prison, and released on Aug. 1, 2015.

On Sept. 12, 2015, just six weeks after his release, authorities unexpectedly took Huang back into police custody on trumped up charges of "stealing, spying on, buying or illegally providing State secrets for institutions, organizations and people outside the country." He was denied permission to see his family and meet with a lawyer, and officials even denied relatives the opportunity to send him necessities, such as money and clothes.

He was released on bail on Feb. 5, 2016.

China Aid reports abuses, such as those experienced by Huang, in order to stand in solidarity with persecuted Christians and promote religious freedom, human rights, and rule of law.

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