

# CHINA: CCP document exposes strict supervision of preachers

*Chinese authorities are implementing policies to supervise Christian preachers, including evaluation tests and auditing of sermon content*

By Jiang Tao

Bitter Winter (29.09.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2RijDDa> – Bitter Winter received a confidential CCP document entitled Compilation of Special Operation Exemplary Cases, which mentions policies applied for the supervision of preachers in Henan Province.

According to the document, to reduce the number of preachers, Xihua county authorities are evaluating preachers based on their “political leanings, the observance of laws and discipline, and legal compliance in hosting religious activities.” As a result, this “political evaluation” has reduced the total number of preachers by 162.

In the city of Sanmenxia, tests have been carried out to evaluate preachers on their knowledge of traditional Chinese holidays and Party policies. Besides, measures have been taken to “veto the sermons that violate policy statutes or are opposed to ‘sinicization’ of religion.”

The Qingfeng county authorities are taking extraordinary measures to control the content of sermons and implement multi-layered checks strictly. This, first of all, includes the demand that preachers “unify the content and topics of sermons for every Sunday for the entire year across all of the 43 Christian sites.” Authorities have even demanded that sermon plans be presented in a particular format and displayed on churches’ walls, to be checked and recorded by the County Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs.

The county is also demanding a “unified sermon file.” The sermons that do not correspond to the requirements are criticized and fined by withholding 50 RMB in sermon subsidies. Also, the Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs has started random inspections of churches.

Furthermore, the county is demanding that preachers guarantee that each time before they preach, they study CCP religious policies for 15 minutes. Authorities have even jointly arranged for government employees to listen in on congregations to supervise the content of sermons.

As per some commentators, while the authorities are using evaluations as an excuse to reduce the number of preachers, their real motive is to identify the preachers who “obey the Party.” Those who do not, inevitably, lose their preaching qualifications and could be arrested at any time. The preachers who pass the evaluations become the mouthpieces for the authorities propagating their religious policies and patriotic education.

Reported by Jiang Tao

**Jiang Tao**

*Jiang Tao (uses pseudonyms for security reasons), aged 42, is from Henan Province. He previously served as a magazine editor and has long been concerned about vulnerable groups that are being persecuted in China. He has written a variety of commentaries probing human rights issues in China, and his articles have been published in international journals. After leaving his magazine job in 2015, he started visiting and interviewing persecuted religious groups and other vulnerable groups and gathering information about incidents. He joined Bitter Winter in 2018, and since then is dedicated to reporting the persecution incidents in Henan, Shanghai, Anhui, and other regions.*

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