

## Christianity Thriving in China Despite 70 Years of Communist Rule



A persecution analyst has told *Premier* that Christianity is growing in China despite 70 years of the government clamping down on religious freedom.

The Communist Party celebrated its 70th year in power on Tuesday as the government takes steps toward continuing to tighten its control over religious minorities.

Christian charity Open Doors said a draft paper has recently been published presenting ideas on how religious groups should conduct their activities in the future.

The document, 'Measures for the Administration of Religious Groups', suggests new regulations on financial accounting of day-to-day operations and makes the threshold for the establishment of religious groups even harder.

This is on top of recent crackdowns like under 18s being banned from attending a religious building and banning the sale of Bibles and other Christian literature from shops.

Julia Bicknell, analyst of the Open Doors World Watch List, told Premier suffering is the "DNA of Chinese Christianity" but it has never stopped the growth of the Church there.

“In 1950, they were only several hundred thousand Christians. They suffered all through the Cultural Revolution. Chinese Christians were martyred and they were sent to prison.

“But far from stopping the growth of Christianity, it was almost like people around them saw how they were prepared to put their faith above everything else and it actually prompted a growth in Christianity across China. This was particularly the case in the rural areas.

“China came to open up more to the outside world in the 1980s and there were probably several million Christians.

“And again, as we’ve seen, during the 1990s, as those Christians have moved into the cities in China, they’ve you know developed house churches, they meet in people’s flats and in buildings.

“They don’t necessarily need to go to a church building to be a church. And so they’ve just kind of grown on the ground as it were, over the years.”

Bicknell said despite the Communists being in power, the number of Christians far outweigh the members of the Communist Party. It’s reported that there are 97 million Christians in the country.

Bicknell said Christians in the West should look to Christians in China with admiration and pray that God strengthens their faith and resilience.

“I was there last year. We did ask some of them how we can pray for them and they just said ‘not that these restrictions will be taken away, but that we remain firm and strong, even as we live with them’.”

- Source: [premier.org.uk](http://premier.org.uk)