



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on July 20, 2020

China Withholding State Aid From Christians Who Won't Worship Communism

The Chinese government is threatening Christians with the loss of their welfare benefits unless they replace religious images in their homes with pictures of Communist Party leaders and, in some cases, even renounce their faith, reports [Bitter Winter](#).

"In April, the government of a town administered by Linfen, a prefecture-level city in the northern province of Shanxi, called officials from all villages under its jurisdiction for a meeting," wrote the website. "The participants were ordered to remove crosses, religious symbols and images from the homes of people of faith who receive social welfare payments and replace them with portraits of Chairman Mao and President Xi Jinping. The officials were instructed to annul the subsidies to those who protest the order."



Losing one's subsidies would be a hardship at any time, but it could be devastating for the many low-income Chinese who have suffered further deprivation under the communist government's coronavirus lockdowns.

Nonetheless, the officials dutifully carried out their orders, even applying the rules to members of state-approved Three-Self churches. A member of one such congregation told Bitter Winter "that local officials tore down all religious couplets and a calendar with an image of Jesus in his home and posted a portrait of Mao Zedong instead." The Christian recalled the official's words: "Impoverished religious households can't receive money from the state for nothing — they must obey the Communist Party for the money they receive."

Officials removed a cross and images of Jesus from the home of a house-church pastor in May, replacing them with a picture of Mao. "The government," the pastor explained, "is trying to eliminate our belief and wants to become God instead of Jesus."

Linfen isn't the only place in China where believers are being persecuted in this fashion. "In April, the government of Xinyu city in the southeastern province of Jiangxi withdrew a disabled Christian's minimum living subsidy and a monthly disability allowance of 100 RMB (about \$14)," noted Bitter Winter. "Officials told me that we would be treated as anti-Party elements if my husband and I continued attending worship services," recounted the man's wife.

An octogenarian Three-Self church member from elsewhere in Jiangxi lost her government aid when she said, "Thank God," after receiving her \$28 monthly subsidy in January. "They expected me to praise the kindness of the Communist Party instead," she said.



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An official in the eastern province of Shandong raided a Christian's home, posting pictures of Mao and Xi. That official also removed all doubt as to the purpose of his actions when, according to the believer, he declared, "These are the greatest gods. If you want to worship somebody, they are the ones."

"A Christian from Weihui city in the central province of Henan has been taking care of her two sons by herself after her husband died unexpectedly more than ten years ago. She started receiving a minimum living allowance from the state in 2016," penned Bitter Winter. "In early April, a village official ordered the woman to sign a statement renouncing her faith and destroy all Christian symbols in her house. Since she refused, her allowance was canceled."

In mid-April, a woman in her 70s from another city in Henan lost her various welfare payments when officials found a cross image on her front door. "They tore it down immediately," the woman recalled. "Afterward, both my minimum living allowance and poverty alleviation subsidy were canceled. I am being driven to a dead end. I have diabetes and need injections regularly."

"This little money she received from the government was her bread and butter," a neighbor said. "But it has been canceled because of a cross image, causing great harm to this woman."

What has really caused great harm to the woman is being dependent on the government, because with government money comes government control. The totalitarian state demands to be worshiped, and if people won't do so voluntarily, they will be starved into it.

China's Christians didn't choose to be wards of the state; they were born into it. Now is the time for the church to come to their aid, proving that God, not Mao, Xi, or any other political leader, is the true source of their sustenance.

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