

## Week 6: Pray for John Cao (China)



Pastor John Cao (60) is serving a seven-year prison sentence in China's Yunnan province for "organising illegal border crossings" between China and Myanmar. A resident of North Carolina, he made many trips to his native China to establish schools and work among the poor before expanding his humanitarian work into Myanmar. He was detained in March 2017 while returning to China from Myanmar and was sentenced a year later.

John became a Christian in his 20s through an American family he met in China. He studied in America and then ministered to thousands of Chinese students in American universities before becoming a pastor in North Carolina. Pastor John then felt called to minister to the poor in China and spent over two decades helping to establish schools in central and southern China.

In 2014 he became involved in aid work in neighbouring Myanmar, where he set up 16 schools for over 2,000 children and organised food and clothing programmes for the Wa and Kachin ethnic minorities. He made regular trips into Myanmar without restriction, but in March 2017 he was returning from Myanmar when Chinese security agents seized him. In March 2018 he was sentenced to seven years in prison. He appealed, but his sentence was upheld in July 2019.

When first imprisoned, Pastor John was refused a Bible but searched the prison library for Bible passages and hymns lyrics, which he copied onto unfolded toothpaste boxes. He eventually got a Bible in September 2018 to his great joy. In August 2019 Pastor John was moved to a prison in Kunming, which is easier for his mother to visit. However, he has been denied a Bible in this prison.

### Family

Pastor John married US citizen Jamie Powell in 1988 and they have two sons, Ben and Amos. Pastor John's sister and 84-year-old mother Sun Jinhui (who lives in China) were permitted to visit him for the first time in July 2019 but the coronavirus pandemic has limited his mother's visits since.

### Latest News

Pastor John's defence lawyer Yang Hui and his mother had recent requests to the prison authorities to deliver a Bible to him refused. Lawyer Yang met Pastor John through the prison's video conferencing system on 25 February and reported that he appeared in good health except for some dental issues. Yang Hui read verses from the book of James to Pastor John, who told the lawyer that his mother writes several Bible verses in each letter she sends and he memorises them.

## Prayer Diary

- Sunday** Ask God to bless Pastor John and keep his faith strong.
- Monday** Pray for healing from his various health problems.
- Tuesday** Pray that Pastor John would be released early.
- Wednesday** Pray for comfort and hope for Jamie, Ben and Amos.
- Thursday** Ask God to bless and strengthen Sun Jinhui.
- Friday** Pray for Pastor John's witness to prisoners and guards.
- Saturday** Pray that others would continue his ministry to the poor.

