

Week 2: Pray for Yang Rongli (China)

Arrest and Sentence Yang Rongli (56) is head pastor of the 50,000-member Linfen House Church Network, a group of thirty sister churches in Linfen city and surrounding villages in Shanxi Province. She is also pastor of Linfen's Golden Lampstand Church. Pastor Yang is serving a seven-year prison sentence for "illegally occupying farming land" and "disturbing transportation order by gathering masses", and is due for release in November 2016. She and four other pastors were arrested in September 2009 because they organised a prayer rally after a violent church raid.



On 13 September 2009, a mob of 400 including police and local government officials armed with shovels, batons and iron hooks beat church members sleeping in a factory – the congregation was too large to meet in homes and was using the Good News Cloth Shoe Factory while a new church was built. Over one hundred Christians were injured, more than thirty seriously. Two bulldozers destroyed the foundations of the new church building, and 17 other buildings at the factory complex were destroyed. Officials took money, Bibles, clothes and phones, and shut off power and water supplies. The next day, despite police threats, a huge prayer rally was held.



Pastor Yang and four other leaders, including her husband Pastor Wang Xiaoguang, were arrested without warrant on 23 September 2009. On 10 October, the Public Security Bureau offered to release four of the church leaders but retain Yang Rongli. The church leaders refused to go without her. The pastors were sentenced on 25 November: Pastor Yang to seven years' imprisonment and a 30,000 yuan (€4211) fine; her husband to three years' imprisonment and a 10,000 yuan (€1404) fine. The others were sentenced to three and a half or four years in prison.

Family Pastor Yang's husband Pastor Wang has helped her to lead the church for over 30 years. They have a son, Wang Yunxiang. Pastor Yang comes from a Christian family – her brother leads missions in different parts of China; her sister was detained without warrant for five days in October 2009 along with several other Linfen church leaders.

Latest news from prison In August 2013, it was reported that Yang Rongli was suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure and hepatitis, that she felt dizzy and disoriented all the time and that the authorities would not provide the medical care she needed. Medical facilities in the prison are severely limited. However, in November 2014, Linfen church reported that she was in good health, and that the church was fully functioning.

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would encourage and sustain Pastor Yang in prison.
2. Pray that Pastor Yang would receive any medical care she needs.
3. Pray for Pastor Yang's family and church as they wait for her release.