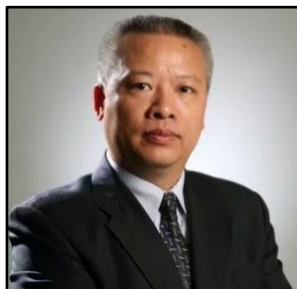


Week 5: Pray for Zhang Chunlei (China)



Elder Zhang Chunlei leads the banned Ren'ai (Love) Reformed Church in Guiyang, capital of China's southwestern Guizhou province. A house church of under one hundred members, it refuses to join China's official Protestant church, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. He has been in detention since March 2021 and stood trial for "fraud and inciting subversion of state power" in November 2022, but the court's verdict was never made public and his sentence is unknown.

Elder Zhang previously worked as a government official in the Guizhou Provincial Department from 1985 before starting his own business in 1993. He became a Christian in 2008 and later entered full-time church ministry. "Politicians and businessmen were my idols before I was joyfully called to follow the Lord in 2008," he wrote in 2022.

Elder Zhang was one of the first of over 450 Christian leaders to sign the "Declaration for the Sake of the Christian Faith" written by Pastor Wang Yi of Chengdu Early Rain Covenant Church following the introduction of China's restrictive Regulations on Religious Affairs in February 2018. Pastor Wang was imprisoned and over half of the pastors who signed his statement were summoned to speak with national security officers. Many house churches were shut down.

In September 2018 Ren'ai Church was banned and members could no longer meet in their premises in the Zhongtian Commerce Building. They continued to hold services in restaurants and hotels but Chinese Communist Party agents repeatedly raided their gatherings. Following a raid on a church retreat in March 2021 Elder Zhang was detained for "illegally operating as an association", later changed to the more serious charge of "fraud" for collecting offerings from church members. His wife Yang Aiqing was detained for 24 hours, also on suspicion of fraud, and was interrogated while handcuffed and shackled.

In January 2022 Elder Zhang was further charged with "inciting subversion of state power". He stood trial on the combined charge of "fraud and inciting subversion of state power" at Guiyang Intermediate People's Court in November 2022, but the court's verdict was never announced. Yang Aiqing applied to attend the trial but the court refused and did not allow her to see her husband afterwards.

Family

Elder Zhang is married to Yang Aiqing and they have two adult children and a grandchild.

Latest News

Elder Zhang was treated in Sanjiang hospital in August 2023 after suffering a bout of cholecystitis (gall bladder inflammation).

Prayer Diary

Sunday	Ask God to protect and encourage Elder Zhang in prison.
Monday	Pray for complete healing from gall bladder inflammation.
Tuesday	Pray that Elder Zhang would be released soon.
Wednesday	Pray for Elder Zhang's witness to other prisoners and guards.
Thursday	Pray for protection, provision and hope for Yang Aiqing.
Friday	Ask God to bless and encourage Ren'ai Church.
Saturday	Pray for an end to the severe restrictions on Chinese churches.

