

Chairman Gallagher Opening Remarks

USCIRF Opening Remarks

1.25.24

as prepared for delivery

Hi, I'm Mike Gallagher and I represent Wisconsin's great 8th District in Congress, where I chair the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party.

Thank you to USCIRF for inviting me to speak, and for holding such an important hearing on how strategies and tactics from the CCP's brutal war on religion are increasingly being used to restrict religious practice throughout Southeast Asia.

I'm sorry I couldn't be there to join you in person, but I wanted to share some insights from our work on the faithful who are in crisis inside China.

The Chinese Communist Party is rewriting the Bible.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus famously defends a woman caught committing adultery against her accusers, saying "let he among you without sin cast the first stone"

The chastened accusers slink away and Jesus says to the woman, "Has no one condemned you? Then neither do I condemn you. Go forth and sin no more."

A beautiful story of forgiveness and mercy.

Unless you're a CCP official. Then it's a story of a dissident challenging the authority of the State.

A possible sneak preview of what a "Bible with socialist characteristics" might look like appeared in a Chinese university text book in 2020. The rewritten Gospel of John excerpt ends, not with mercy, but with Jesus himself stoning the adulterous woman to death.

Across Henan province, local CCP officials forced Protestant churches to replace the Ten Commandments with Xi Jinping quotes. “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,” became diktats like: “Resolutely guard against the infiltration of Western ideology.”

At the 19th Party Congress, Chairman Xi declared “We will... insist on the sinicization of Chinese religions, and provide active guidance for religion and socialism to coexist.”

Let me translate: Xi Jinping has no problem with the first commandment, just so long as he and the CCP are playing the role of God.

This is how the Chinese Communist Party operates. Faced with a force too powerful to destroy — belief in God — they have pivoted to a more insidious and more dangerous tactic: co-optation, or as Chairman Xi calls it “the sinicization of Chinese religions.”

Instead of destroying it, the CCP has decided to harness religion as a tool to control people’s minds.

CCTV cameras have been placed in houses of worship, letting the faithful know their every word is being monitored.

The CCP has also seized control of the selection of religious leaders, and throws anyone opposed in jail.

Through a secret 2018 deal with the Pope, the CCP even managed to control the nomination of Catholic bishops — and it seeks to coerce Tibetan Buddhists into accepting the CCP’s choice of successor to the Dalai Lama.

The CCP does not believe in individual dignity. They reject the inherent worth and preciousness of each individual. They do not believe men and women are made in the image of god. For the CCP, humans are material objects to be used for whatever purposes the Party deems appropriate.

The problem for the Party, as the pastor of one Chinese church stated, “In this war, in Xinjiang, in Shanghai, in Beijing, in Chengdu, the rulers have chosen an enemy that can never be imprisoned – the soul of man... [and they] are doomed to lose.”

That is an assessment that we must make come true.