

Persecution of Christians in China according to OpenDoors and Voice of Martyrs

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Preface to the revised edition

This document originally came from discussions with a brother from our church. Since I've only known accusations against China so far from OpenDoors (<https://www.opendoors.de>), and initially only held the October edition of the OpenDoors magazine in my hands, the first version of this document referred exclusively to it.

But after I published this document and sent it to OpenDoors, that brother pointed out to me that I had made a mistake: Wang Ji's report (see 20) *The case of the religious prisoner Wang Ji* was not written by OpenDoors.

He also gave me another magazine as "evidence", namely the "Voice of Martyrs" (from the "Hilfsaktion Märtyrerkirche", <https://www.versuchtechristen.org/startseite/>), also from October 2023.

However, the statements of the two magazines are so similar, that to summarize them seemed to me feasible.

I therefore ask the reader to read the entire document carefully.

This essay is structured in such a way that at the beginning statements are dealt with which are easy to refute. Sometimes so simple that one could speak of an editorial failure: it becomes obvious that no own checks have been carried out. Quick Internet searches in Baidu (<https://www.baidu.com>) make many claims absurd (see e.g. 2) *OD: Selling Christian literature online forbidden*). The *Appendix* describes how you can check the results shown even without knowledge of Chinese.

However, some statements require background knowledge in order to be refuted. This background information is provided at the latter part of this document. The "peak" of such statements that require background knowledge is, that China were "rigorous in its persecution" (see 11) *VM: China rigorous in its persecution*), which then also requires this entire document as refutation.

Statements that come from OpenDoors are marked "OD" – those of the "Voice of Martyrs" with "VM".

In the new edition, not only the statements of the "Voice of Martyrs" have been added, but also the new background knowledge required for refutation, such as 18a) *The social credit system*, 16c) *Freedom of speech* and 19a) *Why is it important to distinguish real from nominal Christians?*. Additionally, also 7) *OD: Regional differences?*, 16) *China and human rights*, in addition to which 20) *The case of the religious prisoner Wang Ji* is treated in more detail and beyond that small corrections have been made to many chapters.

The final addition to the document includes the long-awaited 22d) *Detailed response to this document* and 22e) *Reply* from OpenDoors.

This document is also located at <https://qiaowangluo.org/china.opendoors.en.pdf>,
german version at <https://qiaowangluo.org/china.opendoors.pdf>

Response to the OpenDoors report on the persecution of Christians in China

In their magazines from 10/2023, both OpenDoors (OD) and “Voice of Martyrs” (VM) accuse China of systematically persecuting Christians through the power of the state. I will comment on the individual allegations here – as briefly as possible, but as detailed as necessary. The *Appendix* describes how you can check the results yourself.

1) OD: Words like “Jesus” or “Christian” banned in WeChat

On page 11 OpenDoors claims:

Words like “Jesus” or “Christian” are no longer allowed in “WeChat,” a messenger service widely used in China, and user accounts can be deleted because of “illegal religious content.”

This statement is incorrect. To demonstrate this, on October 9th, 2023, I asked my sister-in-law, who lives in China, is a high-ranking civil servant and has a relatively high-ranking politician as her husband, and who therefore has even stricter rules of conduct, to send me these words via WeChat, which she did immediately did:



The 1st sentence is from June 1st (during our China vacation in 2023). From where it says "13:59" the following conversation takes place from October 9th:

Me: 姐姐你好。我请你：你也能给我发一下吗：耶稣，基督基督教徒？
(Hello sister. I ask you: could you also send me: Jesus, Christ, Christian?)

Answer: 耶稣，基督教徒
(Jesus, Christian) [The word "Christian" is "Christ-follower" and already contains "Christ", so she felt "Christ" was unnecessary - but anyway it's all about the word "Christian"]

很顺利，放心
(No problem at all, trust me)

Ich: 我知道没有问题！
我只要给别人看看以下
(I know that's not a problem!)
(I just want to show this to others)

By the way, my sister-in-law is still alive and not imprisoned - even though that is already four days ago.

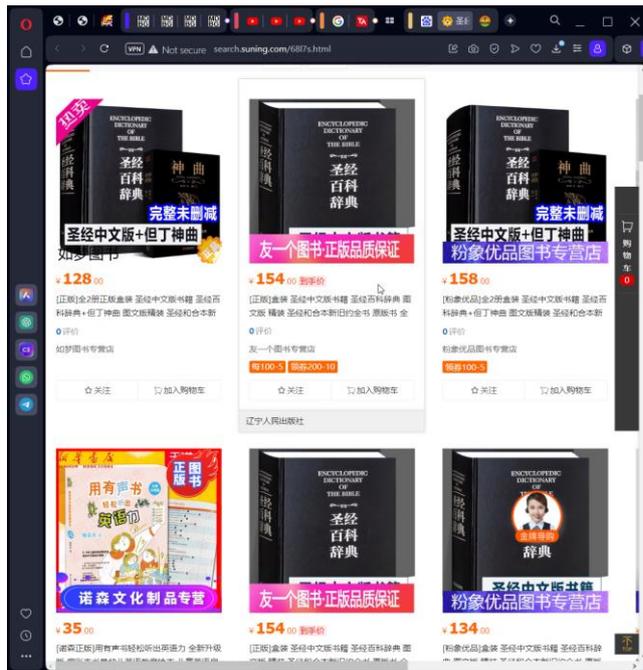
2) OD: Selling Christian literature online forbidden

On page 10 OpenDoors claims:

It is forbidden to sell Bibles and other Christian literature over the Internet. The Bible can only be legally purchased in shops run by the state-controlled Three-Self Churches.

That statement is wrong. If you enter 哪里买个圣经? (Where to buy a Bible?) into the main Chinese search engine <https://www.baidu.com> (like Google for us), you get a huge list of results:

If you then follow one of the links, you end up e.g. at <https://search.suning.com> :



The results page includes Bible encyclopedias, with prices in the Chinese currency Yuan.

Theoretically, this could be displayed differently in China. So I contacted my Chinese circle of friends. Here's a screenshot of their search (executed on a phone):



A multi-page, almost endless list of Old Testaments is displayed. New Testaments will follow later. Each with prices in Yuan.

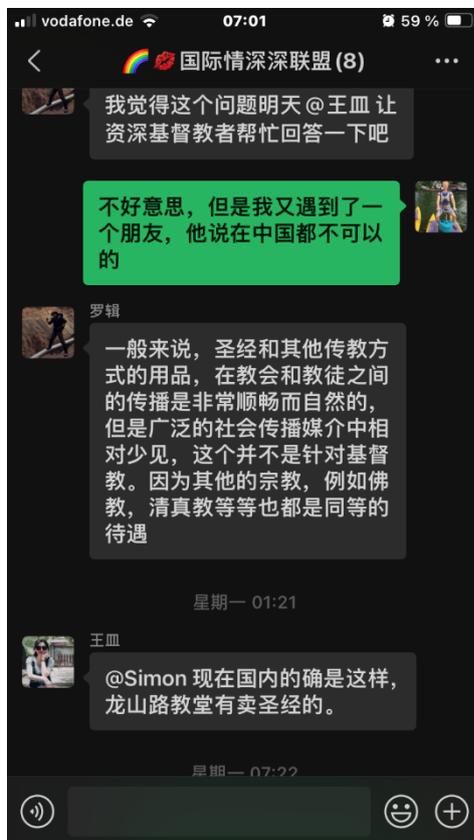
3) OD: Bibles only in state-controlled three-self churches

On page 10 it also claims:

It is forbidden to sell Bibles and other Christian literature over the Internet. The Bible can only be legally purchased in shops run by the state-controlled Three-Self Churches.

It has already been shown that the first sentence is wrong. So now to the second sentence about buying Bibles:

I asked my friends how it is possible now to buy Bibles. Here are the answers:



The first to answer is Momo (nicknamed Luo Ji), whose mother-in-law is also a Christian, and he writes:

我觉得这个问题明天@王皿 让资深基督教者帮忙回答一下吧

(I think: let @WangMin, the experienced Christian, answer this tomorrow [Wang Min is a friend who is also a Christian])

I answer (it was already very late in the evening in China): 不好意思，但是我又遇到了一个朋友，他说在中国都不可以的

(Sorry, but I met another friend who says that none of this is possible in China)

Momo then replies:

一般来说，圣经和其他传教方式的用品，在教会和教徒之间的传播是非常顺畅而自然的，但是广泛的社会传播媒介中相对少见，这个并不是针对基督教。因为其他的宗教，例如佛教，清真教等等也都是同等的待遇

(Generally speaking, Bibles and other products useful for mission are very easy/unhindered to distribute in churches and among Christians, while widespread distribution on social media is rare. This is in no way aimed specifically at Christianity, as other religions such as Buddhism or Islam etc. are treated the same way).

The next morning the Christian Wang Min answers:

现在国内的确是这样，龙山路教堂有卖圣经的
(Now domestically you can buy Bibles on LongShan Street).

This statement is by no means to be understood as exclusive, i.e. as if Bibles could only be bought in the church mentioned - because during our vacation in June 2023 we visited a different church where Bibles were also available for purchase. However, this statement is an indication of how absurd my questions seemed to Wang Min - she thought that I really wanted to buy a Bible in China.

Both confirmed what I knew from my stay in China at the time: that Bibles are easily available in every church.

But back to the formulation in the OpenDoors magazine, which speaks of the “state-controlled three-self churches”. I think that this wording is deliberately chosen to manipulate the reader: because yes, it is true that the Three-Self Churches are state-controlled. On the other hand, these are simply the official public churches within China, whose preaching is on average, in my experience, significantly more faithful to the Bible than the preaching of an average German public church.

And yet even the last sentence hides a small falsehood: Bibles cannot be bought in “shops” (which I don’t know exist), but in the churches themselves.

4) OD: Religious web content punishable, apps not available

On page 10 OpenDoors claims:

(A) Sophisticated techniques are used to block access to foreign sites and censor content on domestic sites. Religious content is subject to special online censorship.

A few sentences later it says:

(B) As of 2021, government approval is required for every app offered in China. The popular Bible app “Olive Tree”, for example, has not received this license and is no longer available for download in China.

It goes on to say about this topic on page 10b:

(C) Even passing on a link to a website with religious content can be punishable.

(A) That statement is mostly false. Because most foreign sites are accessible, as shown under (C).

The “sophisticated techniques” are simple IP address blocks. These blocks exist in every country - including Germany: for example, right-wing extremist sites or sites with child pornography are blocked. For this reason, the so-called “Dark Net” exists in the West, which is nothing more than a technique to bypass these barriers, for example with a “Tor” browser (can be downloaded, for example, from <https://www.portablefreeware.com>). These browsers cause a randomly selected multi-stage redirection of data traffic, so that the incoming and outgoing traffic is no longer traceable.

By the way, the entry servers of this “Tor” system are blocked in China. Thus, the “Dark Net” is not accessible in China.

However, VPN services are very common among the Chinese. These services (often offered from the USA, by the way) are not blocked by the government (which could easily be done), do not require approval and cost a small amount per month (“small” also for Chinese). Through them, Chinese people can access all sites that are normally blocked: YouTube, Google, Facebook/Meta, Twitter/X, etc.

Evidence of this statement are the many private Chinese YouTube streamers who stream directly from China. It's best to search YouTube for "<City-in-China> street view", for example "Shanghai street view" or "Beijing street view". Of course, there are also official-looking channels in the results list - but there are also many clearly private ones.

There are also channels such as <https://www.youtube.com/@Gweilo60> , <https://www.youtube.com/@JERRYGOODE> , <https://www.youtube.com/@Fridayeverydaycom> or <https://www.youtube.com/@JasonLivinginChina> , which are highly recommended to get to know China in its reality. However, these are all made by foreigners who live in China (and who, incidentally, had the same experiences with China as I did, namely that China is completely different than what we are led to believe here in the West), so one could respond that VPNs are available to foreigners, but not Chinese. But as I said, that's not true: every Chinese can order a VPN service. Otherwise there wouldn't be so many Chinese people on YouTube or Facebook (I don't use Twitter myself, so I can't say anything about that).

So why does China on the one hand block many sites, but on the other hand allow blockades to be circumvented so easily? The reason is probably mainly simple economic power. This methodology means that significantly fewer foreign products are advertised than domestic ones and are therefore purchased.

On the other hand, it also makes it more difficult to access content that is morally reprehensible and undesirable by the state, such as pornography or the purchase of drugs.

(B) The statement is false. When I lived in China (2012/01-2014/08), I owned 3 different cell phones, on each of which I installed what I thought was the most widespread and best app, “WeiDu” Bible. I only vaguely remember the app “Olive Tree” mentioned – at least it wasn't one of the most popular apps, otherwise I would remember it.

In our chat, Wang Min showed me the exact same app she uses: 微读圣经 (the last picture, the red icon).



This is still available for download, as the following screenshot proves:



The bottom hit offers the download of version 5.7.3.

According to Western press, China has recently (since 2023) required a government license (<https://www.theverge.com/2023/10/3/23901205/apple-app-store-government-license-china>) so that apps can be used in the Apple App Store may be listed. However, I doubt that this also applies

To demonstrate this matter, I searched for “chinese online bible” and picked the first hit of Chinese origin: the website <http://www.chinesebibleonline.com> is an online Bible reading website. For example, the book of Genesis, chapter 1, looks like this:



Here I ask my friends (group chat) whether the site can be opened in China:



Wang Min replies: 之前我下载的，可以打开

(I downloaded it before and can open it)

I persistently asked again if the website <http://www.chinesebibleonline.com> could still be accessed until another friend replied:



网页有个限制选项取消限制就可以
(The website has a registration restriction, but that's it).

Loaded on your cell phone, the site offers an app. Only a mobile number is required to register. So this does not represent a limitation.

However, in order to be able to make a more precise statement about whether there are Bible websites that do not require any registration, I inquired about the site <https://www.bibleserver.com> (programmed by ERF), which offers many different translations, including Chinese:



Me: 这个网页 <https://www.bibleserver.com> 呢? 可以打开吗?
(And this website <https://www.bibleserver.com>? Can you open it?)

Wang Min replies with the correct screenshot and asks:

请问是这个吗?

(Question: is it this one?)

Me: 是呀, 谢谢!

(It is! Thank you!)

As you can see, absolutely no one is afraid to share or comment on a link with Christian content. Foreign religious websites are also accessible, and Bible apps are still available (including audio Bible apps, by the way).

5) OD: Deliberately manipulative language?

On page 7 it says:

Whether the Stasi in the GDR or the KGB in the Soviet Union – secret services have already used current technology in the past. The Chinese Communist Party wants to create “the most perfect surveillance state the world has ever seen” - but the principles of surveillance, intimidation and control are not new.

There is talk of secret services. But not from the US secret service, the NSA (the technical department of the CIA), which has been proven to have been spying on its own citizens and people all over the world for years, but from the no longer existing GDR and the KGB of the no longer existing Soviet Union (Russia is has now become a democracy).

Evidence of US spying on its own citizens can be found throughout Edward Snowden's environment (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Snowden), which will not be discussed here. Through security vulnerabilities like “Heartbleed” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heartbleed>), the USA was able to intercept all SSL encryptions worldwide that were believed to be secure for years. Experts suspect that the “Heartbleed” vulnerability was only disclosed because other vulnerabilities now allow for eavesdropping. Evidence of spying on non-US citizens can be found, for example, when spying on Angela Merkel (e.g. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/31/denmark-helped-us-spy-on-angela-merkel-and-european-allies-report>) became public.

Yet OpenDoors is not concerned with secret services in general, but only with the secret services of communist-ruled countries. Although this is not true either, because why aren't currently communist-ruled countries such as Cuba, Laos or Vietnam mentioned?

Instead, China is associated with communist-ruled countries of the past in order to conjure up the old “phantom of communism” among readers (especially Germans!). This completely ignores the fact that socialism in China was only comparable to that in the GDR or the Soviet Union in the 1960s or 1970s, but now shows strikingly large differences (see 17a) *Socialism with a Chinese twist*). The Chinese speak of “socialism with a Chinese color,” which (in terms of economic form) does not differ much from the former “social market economy” of the German post-war years.

In any case, there is no denunciation in China and the Chinese are not oppressed - they can express their opinions, enjoy freedom of religious belief and face no restrictions when expressing their protests. But more on that later in this document (see 14) *What about religious freedom now?*, 16) *China and human rights* and 16b) *The right to protest*).

An organization that should be knowing about religious persecution abroad, especially in the most important countries (in its own words) should be aware of this fact. Many Christians are seduced by their gullibility and believe almost anyone who claims to be a Christian or to “love Jesus.”

I can therefore see nothing other than an attempt to deliberately manipulate by language behind these sentences.

5b) Correction: "Deliberately" is an allegation

I was made aware that the accusation of deliberate manipulation was an allegation that could not be proven. I want to comply with this and delete the word "consciously" from the accusation: that was an unprovable allegation for which I apologize.

However, in its effect on the reader it is a manipulation. Yet, as I said, I cannot judge whether this happened consciously or unconsciously. Therefore, I put a question mark on the heading 5) *OD: Deliberately manipulative language?*.

6) OD: House churches becoming less and less possible?

The caption on page 10 claims:

Christians from house churches are increasingly unable to meet in person. They are increasingly reliant on the Internet.

The statement is wrong.

Wang Min answered me on the phone that she regularly attends a home group and that this was not a problem. Unfortunately I don't have a screenshot of that.

On the other hand, OpenDoors does not provide any evidence for their statement. Why could it be that Christians can meet in person less and less often? Are there still Corona curfews, or do citizens with Christian mindsets have to stay at home?

In the meantime, however, it is no longer necessary to present evidence: after China's association with the GDR or the Soviet Union, the inexperienced reader now believes anything, whether it is the total control or merciless denunciation - now everything is possible and probable.

But the fact is that since the Corona restrictions have been lifted, there are no reasons why Christians *can* meet less and less often. Nobody's freedom of movement is restricted in China, and there are no restrictions whatsoever on talking about faith, about Jesus, about Christians, the Bible, sin or eternal life, hell and paradise, etc., whether on the street, in schools, in restaurants, in public places, in the subway or at home: no one is stopping Christians from meeting in home groups.

But there is a restriction - see 14) *What about religious freedom now?*

7) OD: Regional differences?

On page 6 OpenDoors writes:

In China, the persecution situation looks very different from region to region: in one area religious life can be somewhat free, in another it can be severely restricted.

This argument serves excellently as a killing argument. Whenever I discuss and give my point of view with people who believe in everything that news portals like OpenDoors spread, “regional differences” are argued. As if they were saying: “This may be your truth – but only the experts at OpenDoors know the full reality.”

But in the same breath, isn't it written in many places that the whole of China has been covered with surveillance cameras in order to enforce Xi Jinping's policies nationwide? And that wrongdoing is automatically detected everywhere using AI algorithms (artificial intelligence)?

But only one or the other can be true: either there is automated surveillance through cameras and AI or there are regional differences. Because why should the government implement its guidelines with so much initial effort, but only in some places, when IT could then do it everywhere without any additional effort? That would be illogical.

And why should there be regional differences in the digital surveillance that OpenDoors magazine talks about? That doesn't make any sense again.

On the other hand: if there were regional differences, could one still speak of state, systemic persecution?

And yes, it's true: the whole of China, in every region, is littered with surveillance cameras - whether at intersections, sidewalks or public places. And also in religious events, of course also in services, whether international or Chinese.

And behind these cameras, it is no longer people that control the images or content, but rather artificial intelligence (<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-uses-ai-software-improve-its-surveillance-capabilities-2022-04-08/>). Whether these automatic algorithms control 1 camera or 1 million cameras makes no difference. Regional differences in digital surveillance would therefore only be an option if the government only wanted to monitor some regions. But isn't it firmly stated that China wants to control the entire country without exception? This automatically entails equal treatment in all regions: so there are no differences in digital surveillance - just as AI monitors in one region, it is carried out everywhere.

I will explain this topic in more detail later (see 18) *The surveillance state*)

Conclusion: this statement is also wrong.

8) VM: Christian internet and convocations forbidden

On page 9a, “Voice of Martyrs” claims:

In China, Christian internet and convocations in unregistered churches are forbidden

This sentence consists of 2 claims: (A) Christian Internet is prohibited and (B) convocations in unregistered churches are prohibited

But both statements do not reflect the truth, at least not in the way they are formulated.

Regarding (A): Not only does this statement lack any source information, but also an explanation of how this sentence is to be understood.

- Are websites with Christian content blocked? That this is not the case, is shown under 4) *OD: Religious web content punishable, apps not available*, under point C): even access to the first matches of religious websites were successful. What about the good old school of backing up claims with sources, statistics or personal research? Nothing like that.
- Or are comments forbidden on websites, as later claimed on page 9? I'll address this specifically, see 9) *VM: Commenting Christians get punished*
- Or does that mean that there are no apps? That would also be wrong, as demonstrated under 2) *OD: Selling Christian literature online forbidden* and 4) *OD: Religious web content punishable, apps not available*, point B).

Regarding (B): this statement is only partially correct. If, as shown by my brother-in-law under 15) *My experience as a Christian in China*, one does not become politically active (according to the government's understanding, which, for example, also prohibits activism for UN human rights, see 16) *China and human rights*), and does not distribute any unauthorized writings, nothing stands in the way of even visiting unregistered congregations.

9) VM: Commenting Christians get punished

On page 9b, "Voice of Martyrs" writes:

Christians who comment on websites are persecuted and punished.

This statement is incorrect. To demonstrate this, I show a screenshot of my wife, who often comments on Toutiao, a kind of Tiktok, and received, for example, 15,000 "likes":



Some of her comments contain condolences for Israel, such as this comment:



Neither my wife, nor her relatives living in China such as her sister, niece, mother or brother-in-law received any reaction because of this. Everyone continues to live their everyday lives, completely unpunished and unpersecuted. My wife (cocky as she is) is still planning to travel to China again in spring 2024. If she is captured or tortured in China, I will not hide it here, I promise.

10) VM: Buying Christian books is a crime

On page 9b, Voice of Martyrs further claims:

Christians who comment on websites are persecuted and punished. As do Christians who buy Christian books in stores or online.

The fact that the first sentence is wrong has already been shown under 9) VM: *Commenting Christians get punished*. In contrast to OpenDoors, “Voice of Martyrs” further intensifies the statement: Christian books, no matter where purchased, result in persecution and punishment. How devilishly deceitful is this state, that, after typing 哪里买个圣经? (Where do you buy a Bible?) or 圣经 (Bible) into <https://www.baidu.com> (the main Chinese search engine, like Google with us) or <https://search.suning.com> allows displaying a huge list of results (as illustrated under 2) OD: *Selling Christian literature online forbidden*), with prices and online ordering function including free delivery, but where every purchase gets punished and “rigorously persecuted”!

A telling example of the editorial failure of “Voice of Martyrs”: Statements from unnamed sources were taken over without checking.

11) VM: China rigorous in its persecution

On page 9b, Voice of Martyrs claims:

China is rigorous in its persecution

So China is “strict,” “harsh,” and “ruthless” in its persecution. Here I refer you to this entire document, which at best harshly and ruthlessly illustrates that there is no systemic persecution in China and the statements simply do not correspond to the facts.

As usual, “Voice of Martyrs” gives no sources, no statistics, and doesn’t even bother to pretend to have sources. It is simply alleged.

12) VM: Religious laws tightened

On page 9b VM quotes “a partner” who, as usual, is probably not allowed to be named further:

The fact that we have also switched to shortwave radio in China is not only due to the tightening of Chinese religious laws...

No sources are provided and nothing that would in any way support this claim. So I took over the research for my colleagues. If you search on the Internet (German or English “China tightening of religious laws”), you will find long lists of results from Western sources. Interestingly, even after a long search, I couldn't find any Chinese legal text: instead, all the sources just quote each other.

The article about it from Wikipedia is correspondingly thin, in which only 2 changes are mentioned (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_laws_regarding_religious_activities): “2021 Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel” and “2022 Measures governing Internet religious services”. But here too, only quotes from Taiwan are given as sources. Anyone who is familiar with the situation between China, the USA and the puppet state of Taiwan (I refer to the videos about Taiwan in the playlist in the *Appendix*) knows that these accusations from Taiwan should not be taken seriously - they probably derive directly from the USA. Accordingly, Chinese legal texts and concrete changes cannot even be found in the Taiwanese articles referenced.

In this context, I would like to draw attention to a video on the Chinese app Toutiao (<https://www.toutiao.com/video/7289623619811246134/>) in which a disabled fruit seller can be seen. When a customer approaches him, he is dreamily reading the Bible. He happily jumps up to serve the customer. The Bible is clearly visible. He also makes no attempt to hide it. The video is neither about religion, the Bible or Christians, but it shows that no importance is attached to the fact that a Bible is prominently read.

This video has been viewed 380000 times and has 11000 likes (one 万=10000). The Chinese government has done nothing about it, even though the fruit seller is hailed as a hero in the video. My wife commented that this boy was reading the Bible, also gave a like and is still alive. Including all her relatives etc...

13) VM: Deliberate manipulation?

On page 8, “Voice of Martyrs” shows China side by side with North Korea, with their flags right next to each other. Although the subsequent report focuses on North Korea, this type of reporting puts China on the same level associatively. Yet, the clichés that people have about North Korea do not apply to China, as demonstrated in 14) *What about religious freedom now?*, 15) *My experience as a Christian in China*, 16) *China and human rights*, 16b) *The right to protest*, 16c) *Freedom of speech* and 17a) *Socialism with a Chinese twist*.

13b) Correction: "Deliberate" is an allegation

I was made aware that the accusation of deliberate manipulation was an allegation that could not be proven. I want to comply with this and delete the word "consciously" from the accusation: that was an unprovable allegation for which I apologize.

However, in its effect on the reader it is a manipulation. Yet, as I said, I cannot judge whether this happened consciously or unconsciously. Therefore, I put a question mark on the heading 13) VM: *Deliberate manipulation?*.

14) What about religious freedom now?

It is very helpful to consult the Chinese Constitution (<http://en.npc.gov.cn.cdurl.cn/constitution.html>) to answer this question. It states:

Article 36 *Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, social organization or individual shall coerce citizens to believe in or not to believe in any religion, nor shall they discriminate against citizens who believe in or do not believe in any religion.*

The state shall protect normal religious activities. No one shall use religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the state's education system.

Religious groups and religious affairs shall not be subject to control by foreign forces.

So "Freedom of belief" is a right guaranteed in the constitution. But there are limitations:

- They must be "normal religious activities", i.e. no activities that disrupt public order: "No one shall use religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order"
- And they must not be matters that are controlled by external forces: "religious affairs shall not be subject to control by foreign forces"

And that is exactly what the government is implementing! For understanding:

The Pope, for example, is a political figure, like the Dalai Lama. Their influence is undermining the government's authority - or at least that's what China fears. Nevertheless, there is also cooperation with the Pope, as can be read at <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/255276/pope-francis-gives-glimpse-into-vatican-china-deal-on-appointment-of-chinese-bishops>.

On the other hand, however, in China the emergence of cults (such as Falun Gong, in which some members killed themselves) prevented: the activities are supposed to be "normal activities".

Anyone who adheres to these three principles has nothing to fear in their religious practice in China! But in addition, you should be aware of that China understands activism for the (UN) human rights as Western, politically driven propaganda (to understand this better, read 16) *China and human rights*).

However, a true Christian follows Christ exclusively (John 14:21), believes in the Bible as the perfect Word of God, which prepares him for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17), and does not go beyond of

what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). He obeys God (Matt. 28:20) and only does not follow the authorities (Rom. 13:1) when they contradict the word of God (Acts 5:29).

In my experience (see 15) *My experience as a Christian in China*), a Christian in China actually feels very comfortable because he is perceived as a good citizen, and the state supports the same ethical and moral principles as he does (see 17a) *Socialism with a Chinese twist*).

However, when implemented in concrete terms, the above restrictions can mean that Catholics are prevented from practicing their religion to pay homage to the Pope personally. But it can also mean that religious writings other than those authorized by the state may not be distributed. This will also be the reason for the story told in the magazine of the man “Ming” (whose real name cannot be mentioned - of course), who in a sensational article on page 5, elaborately staged with artificial surveillance camera images and an actor, assured that he in no means should be caught: it’s been certainly unregistered Bibles that he wanted to distribute. Because as explained under “3) OD: Bibles only in state-controlled three-self churches”, normal Bibles can be distributed, even on the street.

For example, 3 weeks ago a conference of the German Gospel Ministry ended (<http://www.ccctspm.org/newsinfo/16866> or English <https://en.ccctspm.org/newsinfo/16878>).



德国教会代表团一行访问我会

2023-09-26 | 收藏 | 报道: 房赢 摄影: 吴新望

2023年9月22日上午, 中国基督教协会会长吴巍牧师、中国基督教三自爱国运动委员会社会副主委阚保平牧师在总会接待了德国教会代表团一行。宾主双方畅谈了教会的处境化和社会服务等事工。

吴巍牧师表示, 双方教会一直有美好的交流与往来, 彼此建立了深厚的友谊。吴牧师向客人特别介绍了基督教中国化事工, 阐释了基督教中国化的内涵, 指出基督教中国化要在今日中国的处境中去实践。推进基督教中国化, 要扎根中华优秀传统文化, 同时我们期望有更多的举措来推进基督教中国化。吴牧师还指出, 中国教会向德国教会曾举行过两次“中德跨宗教对话会”, 取得了很好的成果, 希望有机会再次合作, 增进彼此的了解。

阚保平牧师欢迎新老朋友的到访, 并感谢去年中国教会代表团在德国参加世界基督教教会联合会会议期间, 对方给予的关心和

The website reads:

*Rev. Ute Hedrich, Head of the Middle and the Far East, Australia and Pacific Desk of the **Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland**, and Rev. Dr. Eckhard Zemmrich, the theological consultant, coordinator of the volunteer team, and representative for government relations of the **Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland**, extended thanks for the warmth and touching experience during their visits to various places and organizations in China, as well as the warm reception by CCC&TSPM. They hoped that both sides could shoulder social responsibilities with love, and further strengthen cooperation. The*

delegation also responded to the recommendations relating to the interreligious consultation, saying that German churches would like to work with the Chinese counterparts in preparation for the 3rd Chinese-German Interreligious Consultation.

Apparently it is entirely possible to talk about religious cooperation in conferences - even with foreign countries, i.e. from outside. It just has to be official so that the state doesn't lose control.

14a) Restrictions

In addition to the restrictions just mentioned (“normal religious activities” and no political activism that is directed against the system), I would like to mention others.

My attention has been drawn to “Document 19” written by the CCP in 1982: <https://original.religlaw.org/content/religlaw/documents/doc19relig1982.htm>. This document, which I recommend reading, addresses the question of how China deals with religious freedom.

Religion is seen as an expression of a society that is not yet fully developed. The party's goal is to help citizens overcome this “low level of development” by creating wealth and education. However, these goals only represent a long-term vision. The way to achieve the vision of a socialist society, according to this document, lies precisely in ensuring religious freedom. Because religion would abolish itself if the society continues to advance in its pursuit of a communist society:

*The basic policy the Party has adopted toward the religious question is that of **respect for and protection of the freedom of religious belief**. This is a long-term policy, one which must be **continually carried out** until that future time when religion will itself disappear. What do we mean by freedom of religious belief? We mean that every citizen has the freedom to believe in religion and also the freedom not to believe in religion. S/he has also the freedom to believe in this religion or that religion. Within a particular religion, s/he has the freedom to believe in this sect or that sect. A person who was previously a nonbeliever has the freedom to become a religious believer, and one who has been a religious believer has the freedom to become a nonbeliever.*

Document 19 further states that party members are not allowed to believe in a religion:

The policy of freedom of religious belief is directed toward the citizens of our country; it is not applicable to Party members.

Any party member who acts against this policy should leave the party, it later says:

*Any member who **persists** in going against this proscription should be told to leave the Party.*

So the following restrictions result from document 19:

- Party members should leave the party after converting to a religion and remaining in it
- Children are not allowed to receive religious instruction at school

A few comments on these limitations:

When we visited different churches in Qingdao, we always took our two children (between 2 and 5 years old at the time) with us. In the international church they also had their own children's group. Not in the Chinese churches though because there were simply not enough children. However, I

think it would have been possible to set up a children's group if it had been worth it. The ban on teaching children religiously applies primarily to schools.

At the time that policy was drawn up (1982), my wife's grandmother was a kind of village chief and as such a party member and a Christian. Even then, she did not leave the party and was not expelled. I mention this to make it clear that, on the one hand, the word "persists" in the formulation above is a "flexible term", and on the other hand, the way the Chinese deal with laws has always been more relaxed than the way the Germans deal with their laws and rules.

Leaving the party does not mean that you will no longer be able to find a job. Due to the principle of "hire and fire" implemented in the USA (i.e. the spontaneous hiring and dismissal of employees) and the resulting lack of legal protection against dismissal, the obstacles to employment are low, even at older ages. So this does not represent "persecution."

The Document 19, which was drawn up in 1982 during the time of Deng Xiaoping, shows that the implementation of religious freedom within China was and is consistent with the constitution (see 14) *What about religious freedom now?*), although China since then changed significantly economically and socially. My relatives report that they or other officials (who as such must be in the party) have often gone to a temple or taken part in traditional funerals that fall under the same religious laws.

15) My experience as a Christian in China

As I said, I lived in China from January 1, 2012 to August 31, 2014. I was stationed in Shanghai, so I flew to Qingdao to visit my family every weekend. I led a simple, integrated life and can speak, read and understand Chinese - although not nearly well enough. In Shanghai I regularly visited a Chinese congregation with many young people on Wednesday evenings, while in Qingdao we first visited two Chinese congregations and then an international congregation.

- I spoke freely and without fear about my faith in Jesus in all kinds of situations and invited colleagues to church services: whether at work, at the barbecue areas, in the subway or on the street
- Conversely, the Chinese tried to evangelize me by speaking to me on the street or in the subway. Some handed out tracts to me and some invited me to their church
- During his five-year stay in China, my brother-in-law led an unregistered church, which from my point of view was completely wrong theologically. But since it wasn't politically oriented, the state didn't hinder it.
- My wife came to faith and was baptized in a Three-Self Church
- My father-in-law was publicly baptized on his deathbed in the hospital by a Chinese church worker
- In the sermons I heard from the public churches in China, Jesus was correctly presented as fully God and fully man, as well as the Savior of the world from sin and corruption, physically crucified and resurrected
- We took our two children (between 2 and 5 years old at the time) with us to each service. In the international church they also had their own children's group. Not in the Chinese churches because there were simply not enough children there
- There were no regional differences between Qingdao and the more modern city of Shanghai

On our vacation to China this year (2023) we visited a Chinese community and talked to friends about the situation of Christians. My wife was recruited for this church in the metro, but only vaguely remembered the address, so I had to go on the street with my two sons to find out the exact location of the event. This all happened completely openly and without any secrecy. The people on the street were as helpful as the Chinese are.

My conclusion after attending the church service, talking to friends and experiences in public life: nothing has changed negatively for Christians in China compared to my stay 10 years ago.

15a) Xi Jinping as God?

I should probably also mention that I have never seen a picture of Xi Jinping or a Chinese flag in any church. These rumors are ridiculous. But check it out for yourself: go to my YouTube channel and watch the video from the service entitled: “Controversial: Being a Christian in China” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oY5GP-m_eEc). Equally ridiculous are claims that Xi Jinping wants to be worshiped as a god.

16) China and human rights

Anyone who deals with human rights (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights) realizes that there are different approaches: those of the UN (the collective West, which only accounts for 13% of the world's population), but also those from Latin America, Asia and Africa. The criticism that led to other approaches to human rights is that UN human rights come from the Judeo-Christian-Enlightenment worldview. The reason why China is reluctant to support these human rights in a binding manner lies precisely in different views on the importance of individual rights as well as its political dependence on or vulnerability to the West.

However, if you compare these different approaches, you will see that the most important rights for everyone involved are always the same:

- The right to live
- Equality before the law
- The right to a fair trial

Any state that supports the UN's human rights will soon find itself in the predicament of having to support LGBT rights, for example. A state that does not want this cannot support UN human rights.

Therefore, China sees the activism for “human rights” (which – if mentioned without an addition – obviously means UN human rights) as an attempted political influence by the West. If you look at the methods of the USA, you can confirm this in history worldwide: Alleged human rights violations are used by the USA as a weapon, for example to create negative sentiment against a country, which then “will be blessed” by bombs with “democracy” or “human rights”, as happened in the 2003 Iraq War (not the only example, but one I don't think I need to collect evidence for).

The situation becomes even more complicated when the activist consciously or unconsciously allows himself to be used by the West as a means of pressure, as in the case of the artist Ai Weiwei.

Not only for the state, but also for the Chinese themselves, the most important human right is the right to live: this primarily requires security. The Chinese therefore do not see the surveillance state as a nuisance, but as an implementation of their right to live (see also 18) *The surveillance state*).

However, a Christian should not confuse or mix his faith with the fight for human rights (see 20) *The case of the religious prisoner Wang Ji*) in order not to provoke the government. And a true Christian would never feel compelled to do this.

As one of his first acts after taking office, Xi Jinping took up the fight against corruption, and did so very successfully (see 17) *The ideology of the Party of China*), so that citizens were once again equal before the law and had the right to a fair trial received.

This shows that China generally supports the implementation of human rights, because Xi Jinping's actions, especially the fight against corruption, represent an implementation of the three most important rights mentioned. This is in accordance with Article 33 of the Chinese Constitution (<http://en.npc.gov.cn.cdurl.cn/constitution.html>):

The state shall respect and protect human rights.

In this sense, China shows a clear commitment to the Asian version of human rights (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_Asia) - after all, these were largely negotiated by China and Indonesia. The first 10 rights of these are:

- Right to life: Every person has the right to life, liberty and personal security.
- Right to human dignity: Every person has the right to be recognized as a person before the law and to enjoy human dignity.
- Right to equality: Every person is equal before the law and is entitled to equal protection before the law without discrimination.
- Right to non-discrimination: No one may be discriminated against because of their race, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
- Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion: Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- Right to freedom of expression: Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas.
- Right to peaceful assembly and association: Every person has the right to peaceful assembly and association.
- Right to due process and fair trial: Everyone has the right to a fair, public and impartial hearing by an independent and competent tribunal or a tribunal established by law.
- Right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Right to privacy: Everyone has the right to privacy and protection from unlawful attacks on their honor, reputation and private and family life.

At this point it should be made clear again: the Chinese enjoy freedom of expression. They have no restrictions whatsoever on what they think or say (see also 16c) *Freedom of speech*). As long as it's not incitement to hatred - just like in Germany.

The question arises why China supports Asian human rights on the one hand, but rejects UN human rights on the other? The answer, in my opinion, is that China does not want to make itself dependent or vulnerable to the collective West, and on the other hand, it consciously does not want to support certain rights, such as LGBT rights (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT>, "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender").

And at the same time that China rejects support for UN human rights, it also rejects activism for them. Human rights activists are perceived as political actors against the state, which is important for understanding 20) *The case of the religious prisoner Wang Ji*.

16a) Uyghur genocide?

At this point I want to address the absurd accusations of the Uyghur genocide: it's pretty simple! First of all, read the disarming statement from the Foreign Office: http://id.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/sgdt/202206/t20220622_10707637.htm

Disarming because, for example, verifiable statistics are mentioned that prove that over the last 60 years, the population of Uyghurs (who identify as Muslims) has grown from 2.2 million to over 12 million people, while at the same time their average life expectancy has increased from 30 to 75 years.

In addition, there are now countless YouTube channels, from Chinese, but also from foreigners (interesting channel, for example, from an Indian <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5dpmaelaZM>), who travel through Xinjiang (their province) and get to the bottom of that matter - but find nothing because everything is completely made up, as stated in the previous section: alleged human rights violations are being used as a weapon and preparation for war.

Years ago the same thing (or something similar) was claimed towards the Tibetans. But I was able to get a personal impression of them back then. And the truth taught me otherwise: in order to avoid rebellion from minority peoples, the Chinese government treats minorities preferentially: whether in legal disputes or in things like the allocation of university places - they are given preference (China consists of 56 peoples, of which the largest people make up 90%).

Further evidence of the baselessness of the genocide accusation is the fact that the Muslim world itself has not once expressed or confirmed these accusations, while in other events the Muslim world saw itself as a collective attacked and acted as such (as at Charlie Hebdo or <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/karikaturen-streit-pakistaner-verbrenn-deutsche-flagge-a-414874.html>). In contrast, more and more Islamic states are applying for admission to the BRICS bloc (such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, <https://apnews.com/article/brics-russia-china-summit-b5900168d165cc78b36d5d5c068b7a50>).

16b) The right to protest

The Chinese constitution guarantees the right to freedom of assembly and protest. This is what it says (available in English at <http://en.npc.gov.cn.cdurl.cn/constitution.html>):

Article 35 Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall enjoy freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, procession and demonstration.

This is also often put into action by the Chinese. Therefore, it did not surprise real China experts (only the “experts” of the public legal mainstream media) when protests against the Corona measures emerged (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2022_COVID-19_protests_in_China). Because often when the Chinese don't like something, they make their displeasure known. Feedback systems ensure that their protest is noticed and remedied - if necessary, it is escalated upwards. This is the only way to explain that 95.5% are satisfied with the government's work (according to the US study <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/07/long-term-survey-reveals-chinese-government-satisfaction/>).

But: at every protest, the actors should make it unmistakably clear that it is not an uprising against the government. Therefore, during their protests, they usually carry signs with them that make it clear that they are neither against the government nor the system.

This circumstance once again shows how the Chinese system works. And this must also be taken into account by “Christians” who are politically active (see also 20) *The case of the religious prisoner Wang Ji*).

16c) Freedom of speech

There is freedom of speech in China. All can think what they want and say what they think. Publicly and on social media. As long as s/he doesn't engage in incitement or cause public unrest - like in Germany. Of course, the limits for incitement to hatred are defined differently in China than in Germany, as are the limits for unlawful behavior, as can be seen, among other things, from the ever-increasing threat of restricting opinions regarding LGBTQ in Germany (<https://Observationsstelle-gesellschaftspolitik.de/f/6f6183fa28.pdf>), which does not exist in China (the restriction).

As a current example of a live controversy, I refer to an article from the German embassy in China (<https://m.weibo.cn/detail/4960395485512415>), which is publicly upset about the fact that some Chinese (as private individuals) in the Weibo forum Embassy (Weibo is the Chinese equivalent of Twitter) had combined Nazi symbols with Israeli flags due to the conflict in Israel. This in no way an expression of the Chinese government position, nor reflects it the majority opinion of the Chinese people. But it is an example of the living opinion diversity in China.

In any case, such users are insulted by the German embassy as “ignorant idiots” and “shameless bastards”:



The irony here is that the German embassy, as the representative of Germany in China, is upset about “limitless” freedom of speech. The posts in question one can personally find unacceptable - but should bear in mind that, on the one hand, the Chinese have no “historical” ballast towards the Israelites and are therefore allowed to think differently. And, on the other hand, many Chinese are not aware of the significance of the symbols and they probably often only understand the symbols as symbols of state oppression. I am printing the Chinese text here so that it can be easily translated, e.g. by <https://translate.google.com>:

亲爱的网友，我们有必要再次强调评论区的规则：我们信奉言论自由和理性辩论的力量。因此，我们允许一些负面、批评性和有争议的评论出现在我们的帖子下面。

但这一切并非毫无限制：有损人格尊严的谩骂将被删除。同样，我们也不允许有美化纳粹主义的言论或者使用纳粹标志的行为存在。顺便说一下，随意地称呼别人为纳粹只会暴露自己的愚蠢。德国很不幸经历过纳粹主义肆虐的年代，我们深知那意味着什么。

我们还要明确指出，那些在头像里处心积虑地将以色列国旗与纳粹符号相结合的人不是无知的蠢货，就是无耻的混蛋！此类账户将被我们永久屏蔽。

感谢你们的关注和理解

Freedom of speech obviously exists only in Germany if one does not have a false opinion. Another German deals with this insult of the embassy (<https://m.weibo.cn/status/4960677019255217>) and explains that the Chinese are not brainwashed, but have only expressed their private opinion, which – if happened on other topics, who are not so sensitive to Germany – would certainly not have encountered these insults. And it highlights the double standard with which Germans view the world: if the Chinese had combined Nazi symbols with Chinese flags, they in all likelihood would have been praised as rebellion heroes. But anyways, the insults of the embassy is completely unworthy of any form of diplomacy.

I am in no way concerned about any opinion on the Israel conflict. Once again I would like to emphasize that these were private opinions and not those of the government. China as a state is trying to remain neutral (and, for example, to position itself as a counterweight to the USA) and to advocate for a ceasefire (in contrast to the USA, which voted against a ceasefire: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/27/united-nations-votes-overwhelmingly-in-favor-of-humanitarian-truce-in-gaza>) because it maintains trade relations with both Israel and Iran, for example. The point I wanted to make here is to show that Chinese people are by no means all of the same opinion and are allowed to express their opinions.

In this context, I would like to return to the study by Harvard University (USA) (<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/07/long-term-survey-reveals-chinese-government-satisfaction/>), which certifies that 95.5% of Chinese people are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their government. As a citizen of a democracy, this can only be imagined by force. It's only when you live in China that you begin to understand: the government really works for the good of its citizens, and almost everyone sees their lives constantly improving.

16d) The right to vote

In many a discussion on YouTube, when I brought up the Chinese constitution, users replied that the fact that the constitution also guaranteed the “right to vote” meant that the constitution was only a

theoretical document. And that's why you can't rely on the constitution, since the Chinese aren't allowed to vote.

Not so fast. The Constitution (<http://en.npc.gov.cn.cdurl.cn/constitution.html>) states in Article 34:

Article 34 *All citizens of the People's Republic of China who have reached the age of 18, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, occupation, family background, religious belief, level of education, property status or length of residence, shall have the right to vote and stand for election; persons deprived of political rights in accordance with law shall be an exception.*

The right to vote does not refer to the government, but is a promise from the state to implement grassroots democratic structures. Such structures are implemented, for example, at the rural level (whose population still accounts for 36%), where the “village chiefs” can be elected, so to speak (a good explanation with many details can be found at <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2023-03-06/How-China-s-democracy-works-at-the-grassroots-level-1hWI4n96EVi/index.html>).

The houses and flats in large cities, on the other hand, are organized in compounds. Such a compound can easily contain 2,000 people or more. These residential areas are demarcated areas, often characterized by a traffic-calmed area, with small shops for everyday needs and often even with their own playgrounds, kindergartens or primary schools. The right to vote can also apply to these residential areas, for example to choose special responsibilities. Another area of application of such democratic structures are schools, where a kind of class representative and parent representatives can be elected. But these offices have greater importance in China (compared to Germany) and are therefore also sought-after positions.

This implementation of the right of co-determination helps ensure that the Chinese do not feel blindsided by the state, but rather have their own political activity options in everyday life. Another reason why 95.5% of Chinese people are satisfied with the government. These are not numbers from China, but a study from the USA: (<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/07/long-term-survey-reveals-chinese-government-satisfaction/>).

17) The ideology of the Party of China

After China suffered several famines in the 1950s and 1960s and the economy reached a fatal impasse, Deng Xiaoping undertook fundamental economic reforms. Back in 1980, he famously said, “some of us get rich first.” China opened up economically (not politically) to the West and experienced an unprecedented economic miracle, lifting 700 million people out of absolute poverty. This was achieved by consciously promoting competition and the private sector.

However, the gap between rich and poor became ever greater as all presidents after him always defined economic growth as their (almost single) top priority. As a result, social tensions grew significantly, with the usual negative symptoms such as increasing corruption.

Xi Jinping wanted to curb this again. His motto was: wealth must be distributed equally again. First, he fought against corruption, so that today the Chinese are once again treated equally before the law. By the way, this is one of the reasons why he is so popular among the Chinese.

At the same time, Xi Jinping ethically steered the country back to its roots: Confucianism.

Confucianism is not a religion, but rather an ethical system created by Confucius that has been deeply rooted culturally in China over the past 3,000 years. Xi Jinping now saw the need to anchor these ethical principles more firmly in the lives of the Chinese people.

If you compare the ethics of Confucius with the ethics of Paul from the Bible, you will notice astonishing similarities. Both divide society into four groups of people: state/citizen, employer/worker, man/woman and parent/child. In each of these circles, each role is assigned rights and duties that follow the principles of responsibility and obedience.

I find the morality of the Chinese people to be one of the most fascinating features of that culture and I think that this is the main reason why being a true Christian in China feels like a win-win situation. Please watch my video titled "7. The philosophy" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCIrM59K5_Q) so that you understand what I mean.

17a) Socialism with a Chinese twist

So what does "communism" or socialism look like in China? The Chinese speak of "socialism with a Chinese twist" and thereby point to the fundamental difference to classical socialism (which was probably the socialism in the GDR and the USSR): competition and private business are expressly desired and encouraged, while the means of production remain in the hands of the general public, i.e. the state. So it is a mixture of capitalism and the teachings of Marx. The state always has the upper hand over the capital.

In everyday life in China you experience a much stronger capitalism in many aspects than in Germany: a very clear, almost exaggerated, performance principle from an early age. "Hire and fire" (i.e. spontaneous hiring and firing in professional life) is implemented as it is in the USA. Open-ended contracts rarely exist in everyday life (e.g. in relation to rent or services).

Anyone who calls China a tyranny or dictatorship (like Joe Biden or Annalena Bärbock) either wants to deliberately manipulate the audience or is simply clueless. Because China is a law-based government system with multiple branches of power. The president is also bound by the law and does not centralize all power in his person.

With this knowledge, you could go through the Wikipedia definitions for the terms dictatorship, tyranny, autocracy and authoritarianism and then discover that only the last term comes into question - but only if you accuse the government of population oppression, which doesn't correspond to reality: 95.5% of Chinese (!) felt well represented by their government in 2016, as a US study found (<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/07/long-term-survey-reveals-chinese-government-satisfaction/>).

Anyone who counters that the Chinese are forced to answer like this should be referred to 18) *The surveillance state*, where I explain how much the Chinese allow themselves to be forced by the cameras, for example, to comply with traffic rules - almost not at all.

The system in China is a one-party system within which there is an extremely strong commitment to the meritocratic principle: only the best and hardest-working make it to the top. Many people (e.g. my brother-in-law) work around the clock for the country for years in order to slowly build a career. As a child, for example, he was a model student in the entire province – keep in mind, that a province in China is almost comparable in size to Germany (China has 17 times more inhabitants than Germany).

In terms of controlling the economy, the system can be compared very well with the social market economy in Germany during Adenauer's time.

18) The surveillance state

China is littered with cameras: at all intersections, public places, sidewalks, metro stops and church services - there are no regional differences (see 7) *OD: Regional differences?*). However, the Chinese do not see this as harassment, but as the implementation of the most important human right - the right to life, which can only be guaranteed by high levels of security. In China, no-go areas like in the USA or now in Germany do not exist: you are safe everywhere at any time of day and year. Young ladies walk the streets alone at night, without fear.

I recommend my video entitled: "Controversial: Massive Surveillance in China" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyejkapBLk0>), where you can see that the Chinese are not bothered by the cameras. The traffic rules there are almost the same as in Germany. But motorcycles still drive on sidewalks, through red lights, in the opposite lane, park in unauthorized areas or declare sidewalks to be their temporary company area, even though many pedestrians are blocked by this - all directly under the "eyes" of the cameras. Such behavior is not an exception but occurs often.

In everyday life, the Chinese enjoy greater freedom than in Germany - that was my experience: you can let your laundry hang out of the neighbor's window, have the air conditioning installed outside where it fits, somehow wind up unnecessary power cables, transport furniture or other heavy equipment with whatever you can afford or imagine. Nobody limits you and "nobody cares".

When we were once asked to pay fees by an alleged parking attendant, but we didn't accept this because we perceived him as a fraud, and an argument ensued, we called the police, who were there within 3 minutes. And boom, the argument was solved.

During our vacation this year, our son Nick accidentally entered a subway that we didn't want to get on. As soon as he was inside, the doors closed and I could only show him with a hand signal that he should get out after 4 stops and wait for us there. He didn't have a cell phone with him, so we couldn't communicate. Just 10 years ago, a situation like this would have caused sheer panic. Back then, children were sometimes kidnapped. But this time my sister-in-law explained to us in a very relaxed manner that we didn't have to be afraid at all because there were so many cameras that no kidnapper would have ever had a chance.

The Chinese do not feel harassed, but rather relieved by the many cameras, because they mean security in everyday life. Always and everywhere.

18a) The social credit system

Anyone who spends time in China will be surprised that the much-quoted "social credit system", about which ARTE even once broadcasted a documentary (although the quality of ARTE documentaries about China corresponds to their quality of documentaries about the creation of the earth), does not seem to have any effect on the behavior of the Chinese: motorcycles drive on sidewalks, cars drive on the wrong lanes, pedestrians walk through red lights, cars park in restricted

areas, vendors take over an entire intersection for themselves, and so on and so forth. I refer to my video entitled: "Controversial: Massive Surveillance in China" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyejkapBLk0>), in which you can see that all these rule violations are carried out without fear in front of cameras .

The social credit system was an attempt by the government to encourage the Chinese people to be more considerate of one another in everyday life, and especially of the weaker members of society. This enabled citizens to collect points, for example to receive more favorable conditions when renting bicycles or scooters. However, this attempt only took place in a few areas and the method was abandoned as unsuccessful.

19) What is persecution of Christians?

Persecution of Christians is persecution for the sake of Christ. This requires that the person being persecuted is a real Christian (see *14) What about religious freedom now?*). Not everybody who makes that claim is a real Christian though. So for instance, persecution of Pope believers is not persecution of Christians.

OpenDoors makes no distinction between real and nominal Christians. Therefore, OpenDoors cannot distinguish between real and fake persecution.

According to God's Word (i.e. according to his holy will), the Christian should be subject to the state as long as the state does not demand anything from him that explicitly contradicts the Bible. The first question is therefore whether the alleged persecution could not have been avoided.

I see no reason why you shouldn't go to a public three-self church in China. If the preaching there is too shallow for you, you are of course free to meet in private home groups. The state doesn't do anything about it as long as you don't become politically active (as described by my brother-in-law in *15) My experience as a Christian in China*). In addition, the principle also applies to Christians that one should see oneself as an instrument of God, for example in order to bring about a more awakened fellowship.

Furthermore, I don't understand why Bibles other than those approved by the state should be distributed. The standard translation ("Chinese simplified version") is a bit outdated in terms of language, but it is accurate. In addition, there are other recognized translations that sound a little more modern.

One problem is that there were already many sects that printed their own Bibles (e.g. the Jehovah's Witnesses). Isn't it understandable that the government wants to stop this in order to avoid the emergence of sects in order to protect itself from political influence and ultimately its citizens? In any case, it is in accordance with the constitution (see *14) What about religious freedom?*), which the Chinese state has given itself.

19a) Why is it important to distinguish real from nominal Christians?

Because very few people in the collective West can read, speak or understand Chinese, the Chinese world is completely concealed to most - China is a "mystery" to the majority. According to this, most

people lack intuition when meeting Chinese people; when we meet fellow countrymen or even Europeans or Americans, this intuition works like a “seventh sense” to protect us from misjudgments.

This is an important circumstance. Because here in Germany, for example, there are Reich citizens who combine their hatred of the state with the Christian faith, as described here, for example: <https://www.domradio.de/artikel/haben-reichsbuerger-und-rechte-christen-schnittmenge>. These “Christians” perceive the German state as an anti-Christian threat that hinders them in living out their faith. There is something comparable in the USA with “White Nationalism” (a very good theological discussion can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1IS-YOLLSA>).

In Germany, most Christians would probably not classify those Reich citizens as serious Christians. Because why do people hate the state? Of course, not everything is perfect in our country, but all in all we enjoy the freedoms that are offered to us.

And the intuition with which one proceeds here is correct: after all, it is a commandment of God not to rebel against the state if this does not have to be the case.

On the other hand, anyone who sees Chinese people being persecuted for their faith simply because they claim that they are being harassed by the state as Christians runs the risk of being one of those who would support oddballs like those Reich citizens. Intuition does here not protect against false perception because the language and culture are completely foreign to most people.

It is therefore important to look closely: is the “persecuted” person a real Christian who believes in the Bible as God’s only revelation and wants to live out his faith in silence? And is he really being persecuted just because of that? Or do you fall victim to a lack of judgment?

Because, as described, China does not persecute Christians who simply live their faith and are politically inactive. So there is no need to rebel against the state, and for me, whose intuition also works for Chinese people, it is just as incomprehensible as the views of the “Christian” citizens of the Reich.

20) The case of the religious prisoner Wang Ji

In another magazine (2023/09? - unfortunately I only have 2 photos of two DinA4 pages that do not show the magazine number) OpenDoors reports on the case of “Wang Ji”, who ended up in a Chinese prison because he in his sermon proclaimed:

We have a duty to tell Xi Jinping that he is a sinner. His government has offended God because they persecute churches that serve Jesus Christ.

The report then starts with “It is dangerous to utter such clear words in a sermon in front of hundreds of listeners, which is then distributed worldwide on the Internet. No wonder Wang Ji was arrested in 2018 for “inciting subversion of state power and illegal business” and has been in prison somewhere since then.”

Fortunately, the article does not forget to mention that Wang Ji was previously committed as a human rights activist and was even invited to the White House in the USA in 2006.

In order to understand his statement, it is also important to know that the word for “sinner” (罪人) in Chinese has a very clear annotation of “criminal”, much clearer than in English.

If you've read everything up to this point, I don't have to explain much; you'll understand why the Chinese government imposed this sentence.

As a former "human rights activist," he was perceived by the government to exert political influence against China (see *16) China and human rights*). The government understandably cannot view personal changes such as a conversion (which, I say, we know nothing about and therefore cannot judge whether it was real and whether Wang Ji became a real Christian at all) as a measure that could immunize a citizen.

What the state remembered, however, is that he was in the White House and was from then on consciously or unconsciously used from outside (see also *14) What about religious freedom now?*) - at least in the perception of the Chinese government. After all, which American president doesn't swear by the Bible at the inauguration and end many speeches with "God bless America"? In the Chinese government's perception, this was a practice of religion that was at least partially exploited from outside.

This is followed by the sermon in question, in which the listeners were led to equate the president with a criminal. Xi Jinping persecuted churches? This could only mean the unregistered churches - after all, the registered ones are not persecuted, but cared for. Why wasn't it enough to state that all people are sinners and in need of Jesus' salvation? The state would not have had any problems with that.

So that didn't just sound like incitement - it was, as it was guaranteed to incite listeners against the state ("We have a duty..."). Having been grown up in China, Wang Ji knew exactly how the government would receive his statements (see also *16b) The right to protest*). The verdict made is accordingly precise, so he has only himself to blame in light of his previous history. It could have been completely avoided and was neither necessary nor helpful for the spread of the (real) gospel. This statement was not brave, but stupid. When Paul defended himself before Agrippa and Festus, he did not call them criminals, but rather "king" and "highly honored" (Acts 26:2+25).

God didn't command him to do that.

I would like to elaborate on this. How can I be sure that God didn't tell him to do this? Here I cite Heb 1:1: "1 After God once spoke to the fathers through the prophets in many ways and in many ways, 2 **at last** he has spoken to us in these days through the Son." So God no longer speaks in dreams or through prophets, but only through his son, about whom we only learn in the Bible. So God only commands what is written in the Bible. Everything else is not certain and therefore not a "command".

What is certain, however, is that God commands the Christian to recognize his state as the authority and to obey it, because the Bible demands it in Romans 13:1: "Let every soul submit to the authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those who exist are ordained by God," which of course only applies as long as the state does not demand anything from people that is demanded in the Bible (Acts 5:29: "Peter And the apostles answered and said, "One must obey God rather than men." So if China were to forbid talking about faith, that would be a justification, even a challenge to disobedience. But that is not the case, as described under *14) What about religious freedom now?* and *16c) Freedom of speech*.

21) Criticism of OpenDoors

OpenDoors repeatedly refers to reports from NGOs (“Non-government organizations”, e.g. “House of Freedom” or “Open Technology Fund”) that are based directly in Washington. It is well known that they are given the order by the USA to “dig dirt” in all countries except the USA itself, i.e. to look for negative things and to exaggerate them as much as possible.

The many false statements in chapters 2-4 and 6 have been exposed as untruths. These statements were obviously all taken from unchecked sources that are not named. This is unacceptable: considering the influence of these magazines on Christians, such statements must be checked several times before they are published. Because ultimately it is also about questions of war and peace, i.e. the life and death of many people - Christians also vote in a democracy.

It has also been shown that the regional differences argument (see 7) *OD: Regional differences?*) is a flimflammed killing argument.

In addition, the statements in chapters 2-6 lack any evidence - except that reports from NGOs are referenced and witnesses are named whose “real names cannot be mentioned”.

The consciously chosen language manipulation also borders on malice (see 5) *OD: Deliberately manipulative language?*). It's hard for me not to see intention behind it.

The central point of criticism, however, is this: OpenDoors does not differentiate between real and nominal Christians. Therefore, OpenDoors cannot distinguish between real and fake persecution. The biblical view, however, is:

- Not every Christian is a real Christian
- Not every persecution therefore happens for the sake of the real Christ
- Therefore, not all persecution is real persecution
- False persecution is usually avoidable

Therefore, OpenDoors should become more honest and change their slogan to:

OpenDoors

In the service of persecuted nominal Christians worldwide.

I have yet to come across a story in China where I discovered unavoidable government persecution for the sake of the real name of Christ. What I see again and again are avoidable punishments from people who at best consider themselves Christians and see themselves as limited in their own freedom or development. Of course, there may be individual persecution, as occurs here and there in every country, but there is no systemic persecution of the state against Christians, at least not against real Christians who rely only on the Bible and “know nothing but Christ and him as crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

At least I can say that for China with certainty. I am aware of and can certainly imagine that, for example, in Islamist-led countries there is systemic persecution of real Christians - simply because

they confess that Jesus is the Christ.

22) Conversation with OpenDoors

On Monday, October 23rd, 2023, at 5:14 p.m. I sent this document to OpenDoors (info@opendoors.de) with the following text:

Dear OpenDoors employees,

because in the 2023/10 magazine and in many other magazines there are constantly statements made about the persecution of Christians in China that simply do not correspond to the truth, and because at the same time I meet so many Christians who believe the reports from OpenDoors more than me, who lived as a Christian in China, can understand, speak and read Chinese, who is married to a Chinese Christian and had completely different experiences in China and knows just as many other people who feel the same way - and is as such honestly annoyed because the whole topic is ultimately also about questions of war and peace – therefore I have written a statement which I recommend and ask you to read (please carefully).

Please forward this email to your colleague responsible for China. I am of course happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to your reaction.

Thank you very much and kind regards,

Simon Bruegmann

22a) Acknowledgment of receipt

And the following day I received a response from jens.fischer@opendoors.de:

Dear Mr. Brüggmann,

Thank you for your open inquiry and the extensive research you have made available to us.

We will forward your statement internally and ask you to be patient.

Kind regards and God's blessings,

Jens Fischer

Unfortunately, I have not received any further response from OpenDoors since then. As soon as I receive one, I will mention it here.

22b) Inquiry

On November 15th, 2023 I asked again (this time directly to jens.fischer@opendoors.de) with the following text:

Dear Mr Fischer,

It has now been 3 weeks since my first conversation with you. Unfortunately, I haven't received any response since then. Therefore, I dare to ask again. Could you inform your colleague again that I actually expect a reaction?

The document has since expanded significantly. Therefore, I posted the document at <https://qiaowangluo.hopto.org/china.opendoors.pdf>. It now also contains the very similar-sounding accusations of the "Voice of Martyrs," this entire conversation, and many additional topics that I felt needed to be explained. All changes compared to the first version, which I sent to you at the time, can be found in the foreword.

Waiting eagerly for your reaction, I remain with kind regards,

Simon Bruegmann

22c) Response to inquiry

On November 17th I received the following answer:

Dear Mr. Brüggmann,

Thank you for your extended information, you will receive feedback as promised. But I have to ask you for a little patience.

By mid/end of November, our colleagues in our research group are usually fully occupied with their final work on the World Persecution Index for the coming year; Unfortunately, a request with such a scope cannot simply be "slided in between".

But we may get an answer as early as next week.

Best regards,

Jens Fischer

22d) Detailed response to this document

On December 7th I received the long-awaited answer to this document from Jens Fischer:

Dear Mr. Brüggmann,

We have looked at your request carefully and compared it with the statements we made. Given the scope of your comments, this involved some effort. Please forgive us for not being able to respond to each of your points individually. It is important for us to understand your perspective and, above all, to respect your personal experiences in China.

Our statement on some of the key points in your work can be found in the appendix. At this point I would like to point out a point that seems particularly important to me: you equate a ban in several places with the fact that something would not be possible. This does not do justice to the way the Communist Party operates. It is characteristic of the development of religious freedom in China that the party is systematically expanding its control and increasingly restricting the scope for Christians and others. But there will be

1) things left unclear, which gives the authorities room to maneuver in every direction.

2) avoided open contradictions to classic human rights, which would make oneself vulnerable all too easily.

Numerous examples show that the pressure on Christians has increased further as a result of this policy. The fear of possible consequences leads to great insecurity among many Christians and represents a huge challenge.

Attached to the email you will find our current dossier on China. It contains several pages of links and sources as requested, and is freely accessible via the China country profile on our website.

You can also find the Digital Persecution report, which was prepared by colleagues at Open Doors UK together with the University of Birmingham and the University of Roehampton. Among other things, it deals with the situation in China.

I would like to conclude at this point with a quote from our founder, Brother Andrew, which still has a significant impact on our understanding of service today: "We are not against a religion or ideology, but we are for Jesus." And thus also for persecuted Christians. Our concern is not to denounce the persecutors, but rather to make our brothers and sisters heard and visible so that many will stand by their side.

Kind regards and God's blessing,

Jens Fischer

22e) Reply

After analyzing the answer and reading through almost all of the documents provided and linked, I then formulated on December 11th. following email.

Dear Mr Fischer,

Thank you very much for your answer, which pleased me. Because you are referring to my document – at least the very first version that I sent to you back then. However, the document has since changed significantly and is therefore conveniently stored online at <https://qiaowanluo.hopto.org/china.opendoors.pdf>.

Our entire conversation is also printed there, as well as your 3 mentioned attachments <https://qiaowanluo.hopto.org/China.OpenDoors.StellungnahmeZurKritik.pdf> (A1), <https://qiaowanluo.hopto.org/China.OpenDoorsCountryDossier2023.pdf> (A2) and <https://qiaowanluo.hopto.org/China.OpenDoorsDigitalPersecution.pdf> (A3).

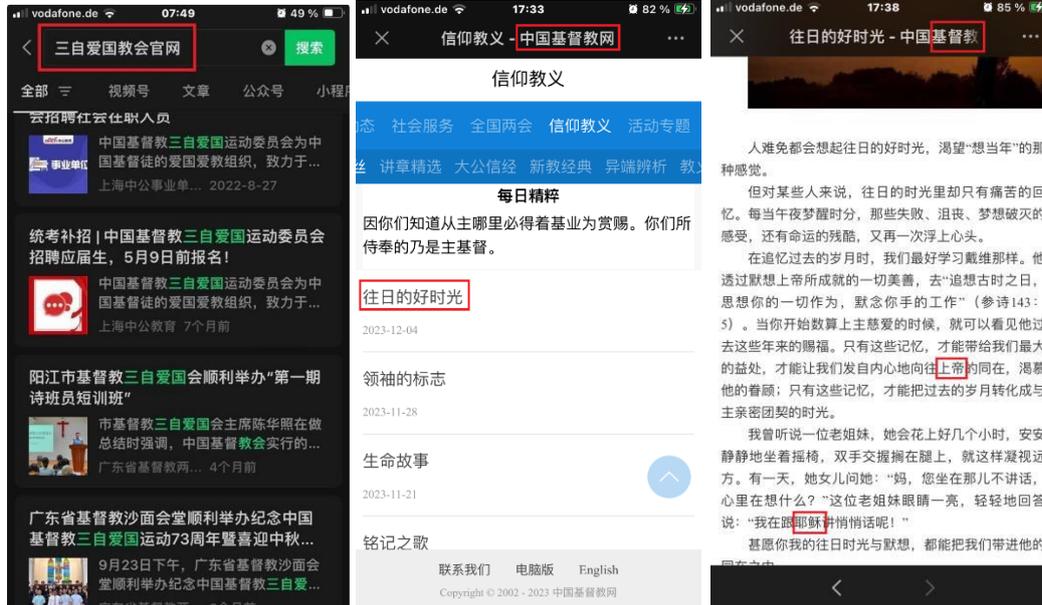
For my part, I have gone through your complete email, including the attachments, including most of the linked pages (which really took an immense amount of time) and would like to respond to a few points and finally make a request to you.

And by the way, you would do well to continue to seriously consider and incorporate my arguments - not only spiritually, but also monetarily, since the distribution circle of this document also includes friends who influence the allocation of larger donations, such as those responsible for foundations, and they already have their interest expressed in the outcome of our discussion.

But now it's a matter of working out the reality in China and comparing it with your statements. I will address a few points about the A1.

(1) Keyword **“Jesus banned in WeChat”**: In document A1 you refer to the TSPM, which, according to A3/page 5, has deleted the characters for Christ, Jesus and Christians in their publications.

But this statement is wrong again, as the following screenshots prove:



In the 1st screenshot I search for the official website of the TSPM (Three-Self Association) in WeChat, in the 2nd screenshot I click on the first link with the date 2023-12-04, and voila I see in the article that opens then (3rd screenshot), the word “Jesus” in the headline, then the words “God” and “Jesus” in the article. And I'll talk about the possibility of buying Bibles later. And by the way, also on the regional differences.

By the way, you could find out all this yourself: install WeChat or other Chinese apps from China. Here's how to do it: search for the Baidu app in the app store (in the case of an iPhone) and from there you can grab other Chinese apps. In the case of Android phones, of course, it's much easier: simply searching for something like "apk download" in Baidu should work to find installation files of all kinds of apps or app stores in China. And I already showed at the beginning of my statement (china.opendoors.pdf) that the results are displayed in Germany as well as in China. Input from the “blocked” words generates huge lists of all kinds of results in every app.

So now that you are hopefully astonished that the colleagues at the UK, in collaboration with the well-known universities, have once again fallen for false information or misinterpreted information, I have hopefully created the right ground to address the other points.

(2) Regarding the interview mentioned in A1 (<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2022/march-web-only/internet-regulations-china-evangelism.html>) with the Chinese pastors: it is important to first understand who the speakers are. Fair enough, this is mentioned at the beginning so that we know whose statements should be weighted how much. There are only two Chinese pastors (Shi Ming and Zhu Yalun) who live and work in China. The rest are either not pastors or live in the West and may already be out of touch with changes in China or have succumbed to Western media brainwashing (which never misses an opportunity to portray China in the darkest possible

colors and always in the context of oppression and tyranny, so that after a while even Chinese people start to doubt their own memories). So just read the statements of the two pastors mentioned who work in China, and you will find that they agree with my statements: nothing has changed in China and you should simply use VPN connections more (that means on the other hand, that it is possible without any problems, as I stated).

(3) A few comments on dossier A2:

- a. The sources of the persecution examples (page 8) contain all but 1 (!) resources that come from the USA (according to whois queries for the domain names). And the only Chinese one (<http://www.chinachristiandaily.com>) represents a “broken link” – the linked article does not exist. The same applies to the sources “on understanding China”: without exception, all statements come from Western sources
- b. On page 10 you can read: “The **US-Chinese decoupling**” process: This continues even with the new Biden administration in Washington. The problems here seem to be largely bi-partisan.” That doesn't reflect reality at all. Because tells clearly, that the economic war was started by the USA in a completely one-sided and bilaterally unfounded way: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China–United_States_trade_war. China has always only reacted. And the economy in China is also significantly less burdened than that of the USA.
- c. Immediately afterwards it says: “The Russian/**Ukraine** war: China is walking a tightrope, trying to uphold the principle of non-interference and state sovereignty, while supporting Russia without being seen as an official ally,” which is then – correctly – explained that China will emerge victorious from the Russia-Ukraine conflict in any case. But the dossier does not skimp on emphasizing that China secretly, i.e. unnoticed (but fortunately noticed by the authors of the dossier), supports Russia. A contradiction in itself (because if China is victorious in any case, why should it support Russia?), which clearly serves only one goal: to mention China on the side of Russia and thus, for the Western media believer, to pull them on the “side of evil.”. Who in any case also benefits from the war in Ukraine is the USA - as always and everywhere when there are wars. But this is not mentioned - no, the reader is supposed to feel anger about China. But what does that actually have to do with the topic? It remains unclear.
- d. It is claimed on page 11 that the government's goal is not to **make citizens happy**, but to stay in power. However, despite the fact that the government does not have that goal, they succeed surprisingly well: according to a US study, 95.5% of Chinese are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the government (<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/07/long-term-survey-reveals-chinese-government-satisfaction>)
- e. e. On page 12 it is claimed (by - no surprise - the Wall Street Journal) that when it comes to **history**, only the **party's version** can be told. The statement is referenced with another Western source. Otherwise there is a lack of information. Of course, the Americans and Europeans don't like the fact that another country is preparing to be sovereign and the version previously told by the winner (of course, flawlessly truthful) is being thrown overboard. But every country has its right to do so - especially after

centuries of exploitation by the (Human Rights Missionaries) UK, Europe and USA. And I am convinced that every country knows its own history best. Personally, I can only understand the view that the oppressors know history best as a derivative of colonialism and racism. However, it is actually not a report that is worth mentioning and does not belong in the context of the dossier. But it fits in well: for it shows how the Chinese are allegedly manipulated.

- f. In general, a large part of the document obviously only serves the purpose of portraying **Xi Jinping as a tyrant** who subjugates all Chinese people. A reference to Christians is not made in the individual sections. And the sources are exclusively from the West, such as the BBC or CNN.
- g. The book "The Principles of Scientific Atheism" is mentioned on page 12, which "proves" that God does not exist. It is then claimed that **Confucianism** is viewed as **more Chinese than religion** in China. A logical connection between these two statements is not established - only through the author Li Shen, the director of the Confucian Research Institute for Social Sciences. Why this book should have any political significance or guide the government's political or social action in any way is not explained. True to the motto: a book was written in China - and since everything that happens in China only happens on behalf of the government, this reveals the actual intention of the Chinese government.
How about searching for "God does not exist" on Amazon? You get a list with over 20 pages. Okay, but what does this have to do with the government, any German or American would ask? Correct: nothing! And what does the aforementioned book from China have to do with the Chinese government? Nothing, but it works: most readers would probably respond to this statement with an internal shake of the head at the Chinese government's persecution of Christians.
- h. On page 12 in the same section it says: "This shows that Confucianism is seen as being more genuinely Chinese and more easily adaptable to Communism than other religions. Reportedly, Shen even saw Confucianism as a form of atheism." This sentence rather reveals that the author did not understand what Confucianism is: not a religion, but an ethic. Which is indisputably consistent with Chinese culture because it has been firmly anchored in it for 3,000 years. And, incidentally, it is surprisingly similar to Christian ethics, as I explained in my statement from the beginning. This ethic not only corresponds most closely to Chinese culture, it has shaped this culture for thousands of years. The fact that it is viewed this way is legitimately correct - and has nothing to do with a disparagement of other religions, as this does not contradict them, and above all not the Christian faith.
And that is it what is meant by "**Sinicization**": the adaptation of religions to the ethics of Confucianism, which in the case of genuine Christianity (i.e. in the sense of the reformers "sola scriptura") is nowhere contradicted. And again: this is not about the issue of religious freedom, nor about Christianity as a religion, but about biblical faith.
- i. Page 13, which is about a quote from Xi Jinping and its understanding, says: "Anyone who tries to do so will find their head broken and blood flowing against a great wall of steel built with the flesh and blood of more than 1.4 billion Chinese people!" Then

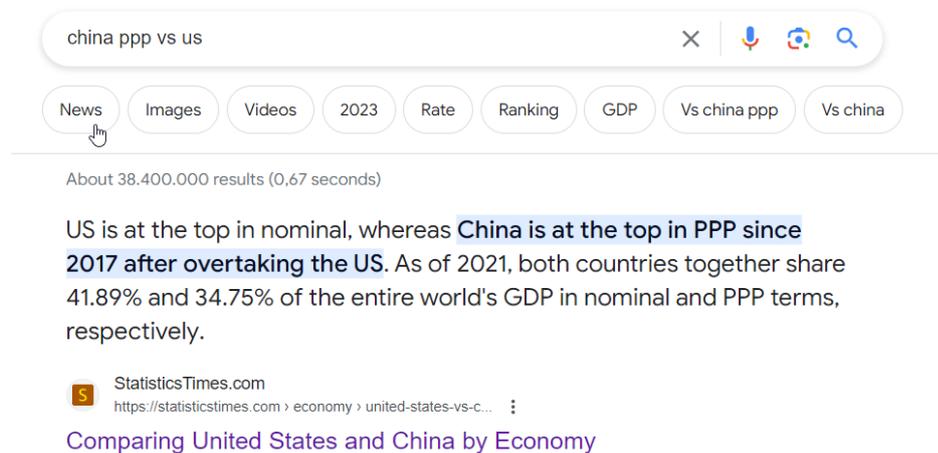
the interpretation: "While it is true that the translation of idioms always has to be viewed with caution, the wording has been used before and it is clearly meant as a warning to both internal and external audiences". It's just nice to say first that it was common imagery, and then that the imagery obviously had a deep meaning that conveyed something of a threat. It's nice when outsiders who have clearly proven how well they understand the culture up to this point can assure the reader what was "really" meant: the will to wage war on the entire world, if they don't comply to China - what else?

- j. On page 14, it is reported of President Xi: "and claimed in his key speech that Hong Kong had "risen from the ashes" (South China Morning Post, June 30, 2022). However, the outgoing unofficial Vatican envoy to Hong Kong, Monsignor Javier Herrera-Corona, had a different view. He told a gathering of 50 Catholic organizations in Hong Kong that the freedoms they had enjoyed for decades were over (Reuters 5 July 2022). He was quoted saying "Change is coming, and you'd better be prepared. Hong Kong is not the great Catholic beachhead it was." He warned that closer integration with China in coming years could lead to mainland-style restrictions on religious groups."
Oh really, the Catholic priest (who he is exactly doesn't matter as it's not mentioned) had a different impression and warned. He said, "now comes change." Okay nice. Probably even right, since Hong Kong finally returned to its original hands after the robbery from England. A fine stylistic method when you simply make claims without supporting them in any way - you don't have to justify anything, because the associations do their work in the reader's perception. How can't it be allowed to mention what a priest said about it?*
- k. Next up is the issue of China having the audacity to stand up to its enemies. Supporters of this statement include the usual suspects: the EU, NATO, CNN and Al-Jazeera. But you have to face reality: in its 5,000 years of history, China has never (!!)* started a single foreign war, while the USA has been involved in 100 to 250 wars in its - comparatively ridiculous - 250 years of history, depending on how to count (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_conflicts_in_the_United_States). Of course, always on the side of good. Be that as it may, a war industry has developed there over the years that requires a major war at least every 5 years to keep the economy going. This fact should always be kept in mind in order to understand the geostrategic correlations. So when China is finally able to shake off the influences and threats, that should actually cause a "Thank God" in the heart of a Christian
- l. Then the fairy tale of the **genocide against the Uighurs** is repeated (page 15: "crackdown against the Uighur minority"). I'll go into this in more detail later, as this is also used in A3 to get the reader in the mood for the right atmosphere in the preface.*
- m. On page 16, the dossier, which has been ordered from a German-speaking region, has the audacity to denounce alleged **unequal treatment of women** in China. As always, this is hidden in a clever formulation so as not to be vulnerable: "In relation to gender, China's laws are - on paper - relatively balanced". The motto is: we claim that women are oppressed, but if anyone asks, we never said that.*

In my experience, emancipation and equality in China is far ahead of German emancipation (there are almost no not-working housewives). But even if not – what does it have to do in a Christian essay? Further evidence that the term “Christian” at OpenDoors is not understood biblically, but rather politically.

It's ironic: whenever something is reported about China, it can't be done without additions like "according to the government", "officially", or "on paper". After all, you have to doubt everything the government says. I would very much welcome this attitude of our media towards the German government.

- n. *The date from which the “tightening of religious laws” come into force is given there as May 1, 2021 (page 18), although on the “official” pages it is dated March 1, 2022. On page 14 in part 2 - perhaps to compensate - the date is March 1st, 2020. So let's conclude: sometime in the 3rd decade of the 3rd millennium. More on the topic of tightening of the religious laws later.*
- o. *On page 3 (part 2) it is claimed that China is only in 77th place according to the PPP - strange, Google says:*



Search results for "china ppp vs us":

About 38.400.000 results (0,67 seconds)

US is at the top in nominal, whereas China is at the top in PPP since 2017 after overtaking the US. As of 2021, both countries together share 41.89% and 34.75% of the entire world's GDP in nominal and PPP terms, respectively.

StatisticsTimes.com
<https://statisticstimes.com/economy/united-states-vs-c...>
 Comparing United States and China by Economy

And Wikipedia:

List of countries by GDP (PPP)

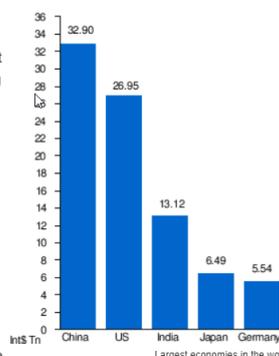
Article [Talk](#) Read

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*Not to be confused with [List of countries by GDP \(nominal\)](#).
 For countries by GDP per capita, see [List of countries by GDP \(PPP\) per capita](#).*

GDP (PPP) means [gross domestic product](#) based on [purchasing power parity](#). This article includes a list of countries by their forecast estimated GDP (PPP).^[2] Countries are sorted by GDP (PPP) forecast estimates from financial and statistical institutions that calculate using market or government official [exchange rates](#). The data given on this page are based on the [international dollar](#), a standardized unit used by economists. Certain regions that are not widely considered countries such as [Hong Kong](#) also show up in the list if they are distinct jurisdiction areas or economic entities.

GDP comparisons using PPP are arguably more useful than those using [nominal GDP](#) when assessing the domestic market of a state because PPP takes into account the relative cost of local goods, services and inflation rates of the country, rather than using international market exchange rates, which may distort the real differences in per capita income.^[3] It is however limited when measuring financial flows between countries and when comparing the



- p. *And so it goes on and on - I don't think there's any point in going into everything - but believe me, as I read through it, I find almost no section that is accurate or*

objective. Overall, the document does not appear to be of high quality, to say the least: the dossier is dripping with Western bias, insinuations, false statements or misunderstandings. And it also shows a blatant imbalance in terms of sources: Chinese and non-Chinese sources are given in an estimated ratio of 1:500. The same methodology is always used to support the following statements: Xi Jinping = tyrant, China = dictatorship with full control and evil, inhumane intentions. For only in such a context is it credible to say that persecution situations were deliberately initiated by the state.

But that's not what's important at first, it's about the – hopefully objective – standards according to which the points are awarded. And yet – how reliably objective can the points be if the dossier contains so many errors?

- q. Then finally, on page 47, the points are explained. It says: “The score for pressure increased most in the community sphere, showing that the new online restrictions are already having consequences.” Didn’t the two pastors, who live and work in China, express in the interview that nothing had changed ? Well, you can see from the grades awarded that the situation has worsened: otherwise the grades wouldn't have been worsened.
A circular argument.*
- r. Regarding the awarding of points in blocks 1-5 (private, family, community, national, church), I would like to conclude by saying that they remind me of the assessment of German exams at school. References to incidents are made in a quasi-objective manner, but the grades are then awarded completely subjectively. In contrast, a representative survey of Christians in China would be much more objective. It would be technically possible. The study on Chinese satisfaction that is widely cited in this document did that also.*
- s. Regarding the awarding of points in block 6 (**violence**): you finally find concrete numbers. Almost all of them are marked with “*”, so they cannot be estimated exactly (according to the explanation), but are to be understood as a minimum. As an example, it says on page 60: “One country expert estimated that in the reporting period of WWL 2022, up to 15,000 house churches and 5,000 TSPM churches and meeting points were closed.” So again, only quasi-objective: 1 “expert” estimated it (who is not named). The number is probably much higher, but we want to estimate conservatively for the sake of objectivity. So let's take 1000, because the expert of course also estimated that it has increased compared to the previous year. So this is how the numbers are determined.*
- t. The total number of Christians in China is calculated at 6.7%, or almost 97 million. However, in the global ranking with China, I cannot tell whether the numbers listed are related to the number of Christians or the population or not. After all, there is a big difference in assessing the national persecution situation whether 10 out of 10 Christians are persecuted or 10 out of 10 million. Since I can't read anything about a percentage weighting, I'm afraid that the numbers are being compared in absolute terms. And of course, then China is at the top - in every comparison, as it has 17 times more inhabitants than Germany.*

- u. *Apart from that, as described in this document, one would have to examine each individual case to find out whether it was **unavoidable persecution of real Christians**.*

(4) **Regional differences:** *if you write in A1 on the topic of “regional differences” that you cannot follow my logic, that shows a lack of technical understanding. Since I am a full-time software developer myself - back in Germany - I would like to inform you specifically about monitoring in IT technology: WeChat is software that runs on cell phones, i.e. on clients. When messages are sent from the sender to the recipient, they pass through the WeChat company's always fixed servers as well as some routers and firewalls on the way there. So if you want to monitor messages, you do so on the servers, routers or firewalls. Or all of these 3 components. The control software on these components must follow the same guidelines, i.e. be controlled centrally or in the same way, in order to function. You then don't have to control every client (i.e. every cell phone), but only a few, always the same and therefore known devices. By controlling these components, you can control all global WeChat traffic at once - it no longer matters which region a cell phone is sending from, since all cell phones always pass through the same, well-known paths that you control.*

So if you want to apply guidelines to these components, you usually do so immediately on all devices at the same time - unless otherwise requested. Or to put it the other way around: regional differences only exist if they are wanted by the centrally controlled control software. So when it is claimed, such as on page 12 of A2, and in several other places, that Xi Jinping wants to apply his policies to all Chinese (“While President Xi has been described as the 'core' of the Party in countless articles, one challenge is to embed Xi Jinping's thinking into the hearts and minds of all citizens and this is where much effort is being made, for instance, through media and censorship (see below: Technological landscape”), it is claimed that he does not want to make regional differences in digital surveillance. That is why it is also claimed then that there are no regional differences in digital surveillance.

I hope I've made this clear now: only one or the other can be true regarding digital surveillance: either there is an effort by Xi Jinping to impose his policies on the entire country, or there are regional differences. If there are regional differences, however, the idea of centrally controlled, state persecution of Christians in the digital world is no longer valid. The same principle applies to the cameras: mentally replace the cell phones with the cameras in the description of WeChat's control options. And so we come to the conclusion that there can only be regional differences in camera surveillance where there are fewer cameras. In traditional surveillance methodology, such as in the GDR or USSR, the intensity of surveillance was of course dependent on the regional implementation of the guidelines - but this does not apply to digital surveillance, which is the subject.

The argument about the costs of surveillance technology is, if at all, only applicable to surveillance with cameras. But even that is a weak argument: when we visited Zhangjiajie, a poorer region of China, this year, we noticed that even up on the mountains everything was equipped with cameras. Even in the consumer sector you can get such a CCTV camera with a transmitter module for 50-100 EUR. Mass production in China probably reduces this cost to 10 EUR. Cost can never be an argument, especially not for China.

According to <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/chinese-surveillance-ecosystem-and-the-global-spread-of-its-tools/> there are already 416 million cameras in China. With 9596960 square kilometers - 1000000 square kilometers of the Gobi Desert located in China, that works out to 48 cameras per square kilometer.

Therefore: To me, the justification that surveillance technology has not yet been rolled out everywhere because of the costs seems more like clinging to an argument that makes no

sense.

But be that as it may, the cost argument only refers to the cameras anyway, not to WeChat or other digital surveillance, nor to buying or selling Bibles over the Internet, reading religious articles or forwarding them : for everything that is done over the Internet, there can only be regional differences if these are wanted centrally.

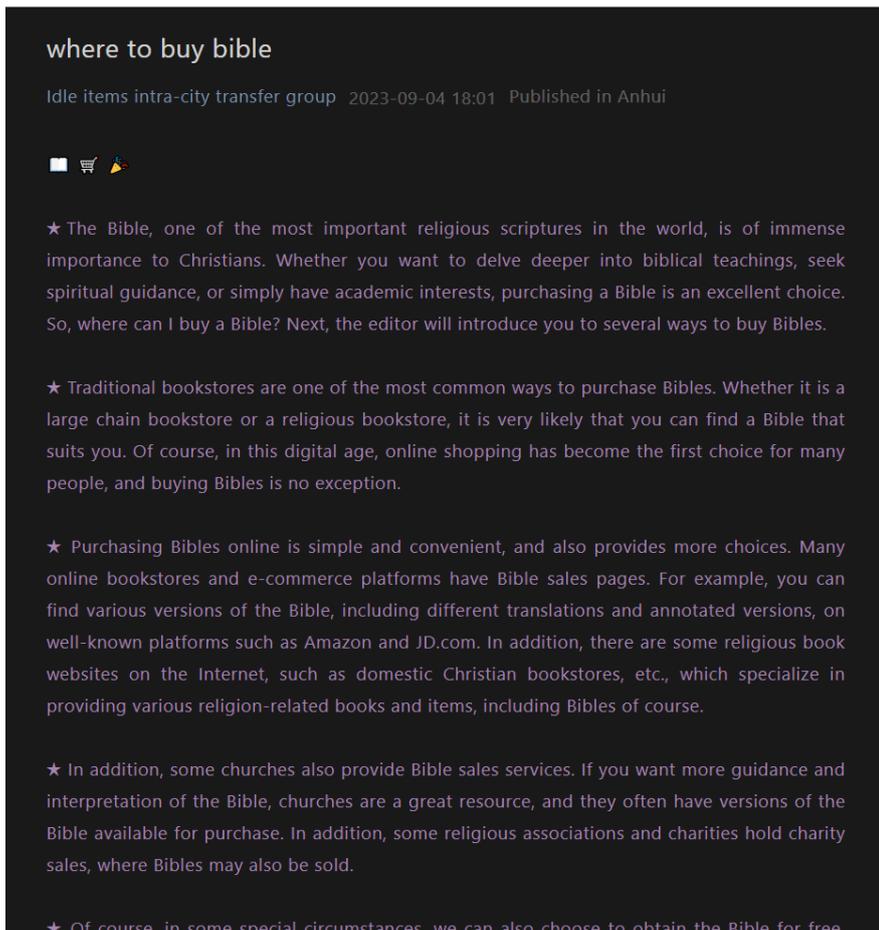
- a. *Therefore, if you can buy a Bible online in Shanghai, you can also do so anywhere else.*
- b. *And: if you can buy a Bible online somewhere, this is not forbidden by the state.*

(5) **Tightening of religious laws:** *in A1 you point to A2/4.1 (page 53), which contains articles from the USA. But I specifically asked about legal texts. In the course of my research, I finally came across <https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/internet-religious-information/>, a voluntary translation service of Chinese laws, based on the linked sources. Its authors are Jeremy Daum and Changhao Wei, two US residents who have made it their mission to translate Chinese legal texts.*

- a. *In the article mentioned, 4 “related posts” are listed at the end, all of which represent further translations (of other legal texts), each translation of which contains a link to the original Chinese text (from China).*
- b. *Unfortunately, the article in question does not contain a link to the original Chinese text*
- c. *As a Chinese man and a student at Harvard Law School, it would be easy for Changhao Wei to fake or alter articles in the appropriate style. I mention this explicitly because when reading through the individual articles I sometimes had the impression that some articles contradict each other or are difficult to reconcile, e.g. Articles 16 and 17.*
- d. *That being said, who needs translation services today? The links to the source texts would be reliable and more meaningful, and anyone could use the technology to have them translated themselves. However - as I said, there is no link for this exciting law, which is very frequently cited in the Western world, and I have not been able to read any laws in the original.*
- e. *And this also coincides with the article on WeChat that I mention below, which exposes the rumor that you can no longer buy Bibles in China as Western-driven propaganda.*

(6) Keyword **“buying Bibles”**: *In A1 you insist on the statement made in the magazine (backed by a report in the New York Times from 2018/04/05) that it is forbidden to buy Bibles over the Internet, although I have shown this with screenshots Have proven the opposite. Please read again in the Google Translator for websites (<https://translate.google.com/?sl=zh-CN&tl=en&op=websites>) a post in WeChat on this topic, written by a Chinese person in China, by entering the URL http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?_biz=Mzk0MTQ5MjQ0Nw==&mid=2247484115&idx=4&sn=ae1e6405e9b423826556ed88623f1e6f into the translator so that you understand that it is not a problem to buy a Bible - whether over the Internet, in bookstores, or in Three-Self churches.*

I'll take a screenshot:



a. Do the same with the URL

http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?_biz=MzI0NTYxMTkzMA==&mid=2247483951&idx=2&sn=c95a2db4d0cd1cc69e3e9a80e463f979, an explanation in WeChat of why Bibles are important: because they contribute to salvation.

b. These are all example results if you search for Jesus or similar in WeChat, of which there are thousands of results

c. Here is an interesting article that debunks the rumor that you can no longer buy Bibles in China as Western propaganda in 2018:

http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?_biz=MzA5Nzc1NjYyNA==&mid=2247486034&idx=2&sn=f6400e9c520f970089a26326fe2501bc

d. Please compare the article with the explanation (from 2023) of where and how to buy Bibles (as shown in the screenshot earlier).

e. Or see the answer here in WeChat to a FAQ about why Christians should read the Bible:

https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?_biz=MzA4NzlwNzgzOA==&mid=2655524281&idx=2&sn=b182d5ba37eebfa5c31131e873d0c682

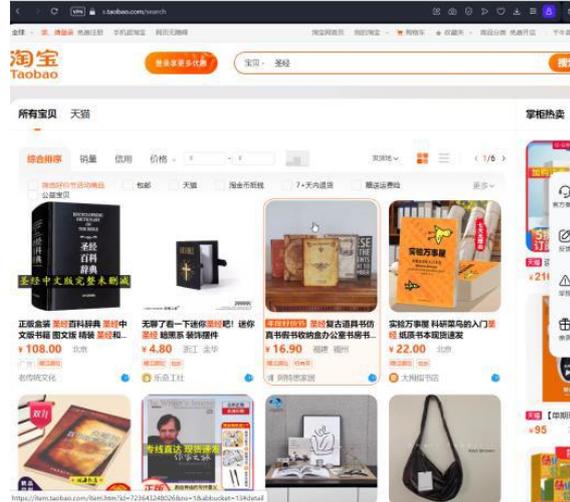
f. Here is the application for a new Bible translation in WeChat:

https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?_biz=Mzq4NzgzNzMzOQ==&mid=2247485649&idx=1&sn=9e2e52d4413bf7a1be9b477252a3bbb1

g. Here is an article on WeChat about how the Bible is God's love letter to humanity and how to obtain the Bible:

https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?__biz=MzU0OTEwNzA5Mw%3D%3D&mid=2247483836&idx=1&sn=b02b4aa7e89031d76aeddace97203c48

- h. The list is endless. The list of results is so huge that I wonder how any expert can seriously claim that buying Bibles or distributing Christian articles or links on WeChat would cause any problem. That's why I covered again the excuse of regional differences in connection with software
- i. As already proven with the keyword "regional differences", it is not forbidden to buy a Bible anywhere in China. Here is the Bible search again in <https://taobao.com>:



Since, as shown by screenshots in the main document china.opendoors.pdf, my friends in Qingdao can also buy a Bible online, and therefore as in the sub-section "regional differences" proven then it applies to all of China, the statement from the magazine 2023/10, page 10, which says that you cannot buy Bibles over the Internet, is wrong. Below I even explain what a general statement is and what is not.

- (7) In the foreword to A3, a former US ambassador for religious freedom uses the alleged **Uighur genocide** to illustrate how important and urgent the West's action is. Therefore, at this point I will take a closer look at the topic of the Uighurs. In the main document china.opendoors.pdf I had already linked the statement from the Chinese embassy, which lists statistics, e.g. population growth or the increase in the average life expectancy of the Uighurs, which destroy the idea of genocide.

China calls the Uighur genocide a Western media lie of the century. Islamist cells had developed in Xinjiang, which were also designated as terrorist groups by the UN and the USA (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism_in_China). There were several attacks (e.g. 2009/07/05 <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3017378/uygurs-experts-reflect-10th-anniversary-deadly-riots-xinjiang>, or 2014 /05/22 <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1518581/five-suicide-bombers-killed-31-xinjiang-attack-says-state-media>), so China felt compelled to oppose it and do something. Arrests were made and prisons and rehabilitation centers were built. I suspect that the famous photos of the alleged "concentration camps" come from these prisons. Here is a report on the situation in Xinjiang that is well worth reading: <http://de.china-embassy.gov.cn/det/zt/7c/202209/P020220903589368181607.pdf>
"Die Zeit" reports that 40 countries wanted to prevent UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet to publish the report on the situation: <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2022-08/un-menschenrechtskommissarin-michelle-bachelet-uiquren-china-bericht>. Wonder why?

Because she initially expressed too little criticism of China. The VW plant in XinJiang was also examined by VW auditors for forced labor, but no evidence was found:

<https://www.automobil-industrie.vogel.de/volkswagen-bericht-nicht-zwangsarbeit-xinjiang-a-610fcaf3bac68e383a387247b9eb42ce/>

Finally, regarding the report by Michelle Bachelet

(<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/2022-08-31/22-08-31-final-assesment.pdf>): she sets out at the beginning, that the Chinese legal texts allow the authorities some leeway in their application to identify extremist people and acts - which is the nature of all legal texts.

Numbers are given on page 17: "Based on the methodology employed, it has been estimated that around 10-20 per cent of the adult "ethnic population" in these counties and townships were subject to some form of detention between 2017 and 2018": The numbers were estimated by two "experts", namely the German Adrian Zenz and a Japanese agency. Let's be clear: the entire West admits that there are no reliable figures and refers to the estimate of 2 experts! The rest of the sources reference themselves.

In the next sentence it is admitted: "specific number of detainees in VETC facilities cannot be confirmed". Then it says: "The Government has indicated that VETC facilities are now closed and that all trainees have graduated", but: "OHCHR (Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights) is not in a position to confirm this". The rest of the figures always read as follows: official government figures say X, we don't have any other figures, but we don't believe the official figures because experts estimate something different, even if they don't have numbers.

The UN report goes on to describe the interviews' statements, although their footnotes often admit that they are unverifiable statements.

In my opinion, there were certainly several cases of mistreatment and human rights violations, because all people are sinners. But talk of a genocide or systematic persecution of Muslims is nonsense - just search for "mosque in xinjiang" on YouTube and see for yourself how large, modern and frequently visited they are:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=mosque+in+xinjiang

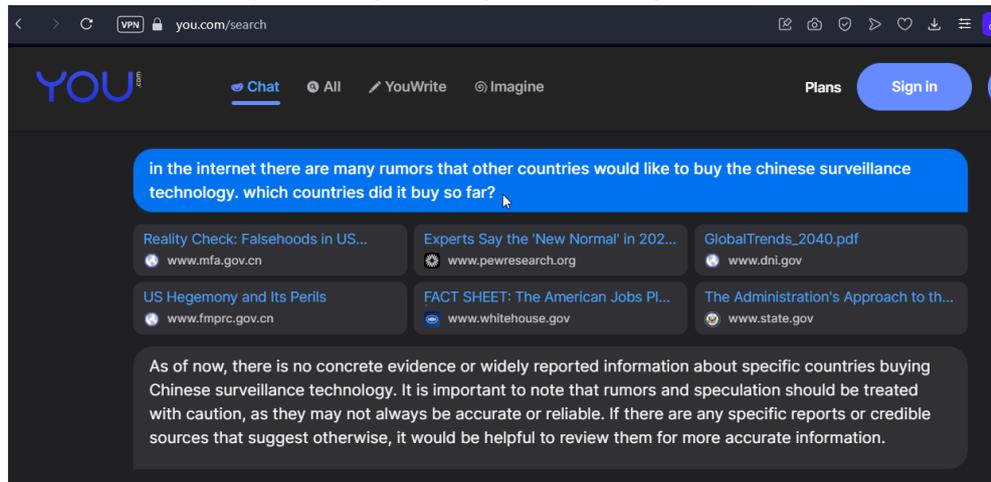
Furthermore, it is cynical when the USA suddenly supports Muslims and ensures that potential attackers receive a fair trial: what was that like again in Guantánamo (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/09/legacy-dark-side>)?

(8) Further notes on A3, **Digital Persecution:**

- a. The former US ambassador for religious freedom writes in the foreword "Responding to these emerging threats by standing up to defeat these digital forces of authoritarianism could prove to be a defining moment for countries who value freedom and human rights". Which country does he mean by this, perhaps the USA? This seems to me like a child molester who has been active for years and who has never distanced himself from his actions and never stopped his crimes (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_war_crimes), but then suddenly decides to promote children's rights. The list of the USA's own human rights violations is very extensive up to the present day, as even the Western-biased "Amnesty International" lists: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/americas/north-america/united-states-of-america/report-united-states-of-america/>. From the very beginning (with the extermination of the American Indians), the USA had structural racism present in the country, from which it never distanced itself. These problems continue to the present

("Black lives matter," etc.), and they cannot get their own problems under control: in 2023 alone there have been 627 mass shootings with at least 4 deaths each: <https://abcnews.go.com/US/mass-shootings-days-2023-database-shows/story?id=96609874>. Those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. I only mention this to illustrate how widespread the modern inability to question itself as a country is in the West, and this is particularly true in the United States. It's always easier to accuse others. The bad thing is that the entire West is doing the same as the USA.

- b. And then there is insistence on the rumor that China wants to **export its surveillance technology** to several countries. I couldn't find any customers on the internet, so I asked an AI (<https://you.com>) if it could find something:



So it didn't find any customers either. What is actually meant by surveillance technology: cell phones, cameras, cables or software? If you want to import the hardware from China, you can easily have it delivered via Amazon, worldwide from a company based in the USA, directly to your home. After all, these are not high-tech cameras.

There is a lot of software freely available on the Internet even for normal users, so all you have to do is ensure a relation between biometric data, action recognition and a personal database. So I don't understand why Chinese surveillance technology is so legendary and given such great an importance. But it doesn't matter. It works to create a perceived threat to personal freedom - and the threat is: China.

- c. Besides that, on pages 8, 10 and 13 you will find the usual allegations about China that have already been discussed in the main document: websites are blocked, apps are not available, accounts are deleted without justification, and - new: finances are frozen. While I have already responded to most of the statements, a statement on finances is still missing. But since it doesn't have any source information, I don't see myself in a position to comment on it.

(9) **Protests in China:** You write that your assessment differs significantly from my personal perception. Yes, I am convinced of that. That's why I went into all the topics to show that your entire assessment of China does not correspond to reality because it is probably only based on Western Internet information, other Western or Western-influenced sources. I'm

assuming you've never lived in China? If so, please let me know. That would surprise me very much.

(10) **VPN connections:** You call permission to use these a “cat and mouse game” on A1/Page 2. Maybe here's another technical explanation: VPN servers all have a fixed IP address. Blocking these is easy because the providers from abroad are known for China. And you're right, it was already common practice in China during my time that Google, for example, was slowed down or completely blocked from time to time. So it would be very easy for the government to do the same for the VPN servers. However, from my own experience I can say that I have never had any problems with VPNs - in contrast, the cat-and-mouse game applied to the Dark Net. Because its input servers should be permanently banned in China. So there were always lists of new servers on the Internet, which were then blocked again by China shortly afterwards. In the case of the Tor Browser technology, the fact that new servers could be opened again and again was due to the technology. VPN providers cannot afford this, it would be far too expensive. So it would of course be easy for the government to ban VPN completely or slow it down sporadically. However, Zhu Yalun's comment in the interview mentioned above sounded like there was no problem using VPN as usual. And if you look at the many YouTube streamers from China, you'll see that it's actually true: using a VPN is easy.

(11) **General formulations:** Maybe I should first clarify with examples what general statements are: all statements that contain either universal or no quantifications. “All girls are stupid” refers to everyone, and is therefore a general statement; Similar would be “I’m always unlucky” – that would be a general statement. But statements without quantification are also general, e.g. “Shoplifters will be prosecuted”. Same thing for everyone. Many Germans would probably be upset by statements like “Germans are Nazis,” but fewer would be upset by statements like “Some Germans are Nazis.”

It's actually kind of crazy to have to write something like that. But as a defense argument I was told that the statements do not refer to all cases, but only to some. However, this contradicts German language practice and would at best be a deliberate linguistic deception. The statements that words like Jesus are banned in WeChat are general and have been generally refuted as such according to the logic I described above (keyword “regional differences”): when it is claimed that Xi Jinping wants to treat the entire country with the same guidelines, in the digital world this means that all devices are treated equally. So if my sister-in-law sent me these words from China, any other Chinese person can do the same. The same applies to the statement that you are not allowed to buy Bibles online. If a Chinese person can buy a Bible online somewhere in China, that means everyone can because it is digital surveillance. Since the statement is formulated in general terms, it is therefore generally refuted. This also generally disproves the statement that Bibles can only be bought in three-self churches.

Regarding the other statements: the blocking of religious web content of course depends heavily on its content, and yes, that's right, very much on the interpretation of the official who decides on it. But if he decides that a website is allowed, then that applies to the entire country. And if he decides that's not the case, then it applies also to the entire country. Next, if an app is available for download in Beijing, it will also be available throughout China. But: the statement that some apps are no longer available is correct. Just like “Religious content is particularly subject to online censorship.” Even the statement “Just passing on a link to a website with religious content can be punishable” is correct. Because if, for example, there is a recruitment of Islamist suicide bombers behind the website, it is of course

punishable - fortunately. Just like in Germany, by the way! To put it simply: the general statements in the magazine are wrong – they others share a part of truth.

(12) Manipulative language: *You write on A1/page 2: “In addition, most of our readers have much more connection to the GDR or the Soviet Union than to Cuba or Vietnam.” True – but why do you have to make the connection? Can the reader not imagine what surveillance is without the terms “GDR” or “Soviet Union”? Why is it not mentioned anywhere in the magazine that communism in China has little to do with classical communism, except that the state has the upper hand over capital? And the treatment of religions in China is handled completely differently than in the GDR or the USSR. Therefore, I have to stick with it: it is a matter of language manipulation, which mentally maneuvers the reader into a corner. And I even read your answer as an admission.*

Furthermore, it is manipulative to formulate that “just passing on a link with religious content ... [can be punishable]”. This is true, but it gives a false impression in the overall context. Because without the addition that this only happens when the linked content refers to extremist sites, a false impression is given.

If we look more closely, the language manipulation goes much further, which is particularly clear in dossier A2. Topics are listed there that have nothing to do with the topic of persecution of Christians, such as oppression of women, Uighurs, distortion of history, the national application of atheist values, socialism, party retention in power, border disputes. These are worth reading and knowing as background information on China - but the tone in these reports is always clearly Western-biased and anti-Chinese. This has a manipulative effect on the reader - whether intentional or not - so that when recounting the individual incidents, they no longer question whether the person concerned could have avoided persecution, but rather hastily blame the president, who was previously painted as a devil, or blame the government, which was painted as oppressing.

(13) House churches becoming less and less possible: *You write on A1/page 2: “The caption with the statement that house churches can meet in person less and less represents a shortening of the situation. There is a lack of differentiation here, which unfortunately is not always avoidable in case of captions.” Thank you for admitting that there is a lack of differentiation. It would just have been necessary to make this differentiation elsewhere.*

(14) Real Christians versus nominal Christians: *It's fair that you admit that OpenDoors doesn't differentiate. From my point of view, this is the core of the problem. Because as a Christian, when it comes to the issue of persecution of Christians, it is not important to me whether Muslims or religious weirdos are persecuted. When it comes to the issue of persecution of Christians - and according to your slogan and according to the majority of your readership it does - then either a distinction should be made in this regard or this should be made clear to the reader in every magazine. It is precisely this point that upsets me so much: based on your slogan and your readership, readers assume that the “persecuted” are “believers in their own sense”. But they usually are not.*

In my opinion, experience and engagement to many stories like this, it's extremely rare - in fact, I didn't come across in a single story yet where I saw persecution of “Believers in Our Mind” (BIOMs). And based on everything I know, experienced and experienced about China, I don't see this situation changing in the near future.

What kind of Christians do I mean by the BIOMs, the “real Christians”? Non-political Christians who live their faith according to the Reformation's understanding. That still leaves

enough room for many, consciously. But it closes the doors, for example, to American hyper-charismatics, since they are almost always politically active.

Therefore my statement remains: there is no persecution of Christians controlled by the Chinese state. There may be situations of persecution in China, but it is not directed by the state.

(15) Deliberately inconsistent treatment: You or OpenDoors assume that the government of China, e.g. on A1/Page 1, deliberately treats citizens in an unpredictable and arbitrary manner. This is precisely the diabolical tactic with which the citizens are oppressed. There is no evidence for this. On the contrary: when I read court rulings, I see that the judges strictly adhere to the law. And it is in no way consistent with the satisfaction of the population.

I am aware that all laws contain room for interpretation and that there will certainly be wrong decisions here and there, as they exist in every state (cf. in the USA:

<https://innocenceproject.org>,

<https://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/about.aspx>,

<https://deathpenaltyinfo.org> or in Germany: <https://www.rav.de/> and

<https://www.initiativejustizirtum.de/>).

Interestingly, the prejudiced Western citizen thinks that whenever injustices occur in a democracy, they were, in a sense, simply “accidents.” However, if such situations happen in countries like China, it is certainly due to the anti-Christian system. This view is fueled not least by the manipulative language described - whether it was used intentionally or not.

But therefore: there is no evidence of the arbitrariness of the Chinese government. It should be mentioned again at this point that, according to Western sources, the incarceration rate in China is 4.5 times lower compared to the USA

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_incarceration_rate) and 95.5% of Chinese people are “satisfied” with the government “or “very satisfied”:

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/07/long-term-survey-reveals-chinese-government-satisfaction/>

(16) My plea: I am aware that you could and would probably want to comment on many points and that we could continue to discuss this infinitely - but that is not my intention. However, I hope I was able to convince you of one point or another. Now the announced plea for the next magazines:

- a. Please include a note in each of your magazines that OpenDoors does not make theological distinctions regarding faith, but that anyone who calls themselves a Christian will be perceived as such.
- b. Or, in the case of “victims,” question their theological stance at least based on a basic confession – if it doesn’t exist, create one
- c. Limit yourself to the persecution of Christians and leave out the issue of religious freedom
- d. Also, when it comes to “persecution”, question if it could have been avoided
- e. Question reports down to the last detail to be sure that they are true
- f. Avoid general statements
- g. Before publishing, check the statements yourself to see whether they are true - no matter how credible the source appears to be
- h. Be extremely skeptical, especially when it comes to Western sources, and especially especially with US ones. It is an open secret that the US has been trying to drag China

into war for years because it sees its supremacy at risk. The USA is trying to do this with all possible means: Tibet, Uighurs, Taiwan...

- i. To find the truth, also consult Chinese sources, which is possible for everyone with the website translator <https://translate.google.com/?sl=zh-CN&tl=en&op=websites>*
- j. Also check statements using apps that come from China: for Android phones, search for "apk download" in Baidu to get a list of Chinese app stores. If you have an iPhone, first download the Baidu app and then continue searching for the app you want. It's not that easy, but it's worth it.*
- k. Don't trust "experts" who have never lived in the country*
- l. Try conducting representative surveys directly with Chinese people, like Harvard University has done*
- m. Avoid language manipulation as described above and use differentiations that precisely define the circumstance described*

*Warm greetings and blessed Christmas,
Simon Bruegmann*

22f) Reactions

To explain, I should mention that I sent the email from December 11th as an attachment, so to speak, with the simple text of an email that read:

*Dear Mr Fischer,
Please see the attached PDF for my answer.
Thank you very much and kind regards,
Simon Bruegmann*

On December 13th The following conversation then took place:

*Good evening Mr. Brügmann,
Thank you for your renewed comment, which reached me. We are currently more than busy in the German office of Open Doors with the preparatory work for the upcoming publication of the World Persecution Index 2024 (01/17/2024).
We will continue to address your concerns as soon as we have more capacity available again.
Best regards,
Jens Fischer*

To which I replied a few minutes later:

*Good evening Mr Fischer,
Thanks for the feedback. I already suspected that, and that's why I rushed so that you still have the chance to take my statements and evidence into account - for example, that the information that TSPM had deleted words like Jesus from its publications is false again. Or proof that there can be no differences in digital surveillance if they are not wanted.
Best regards,
Simon Bruegmann*

There is nothing more to add to this.

23) Criticism of “Voice of Martyrs”

The criticism of OpenDoors (21) *Criticism of OpenDoors*) is also directed at “Voice of Martyrs”. However, Voice of Martyrs even surpasses OpenDoors in terms of source citations: it doesn't even bother to appear objective. I can't find one single source, no NGO report and no statistics - but also at least no "witnesses who cannot be named". The reader has no choice but to “blindly” trust. But it's not difficult to demand this from Christians if you call yourself a “Christian aid organization”.

I would like to highlight the attempts at manipulation in a particularly negative way, see 13) VM: *Deliberate manipulation?*.

Such an approach is overall inadmissible and unworthy, even if it is “just” a Christian aid organization.

24) Conversation with „Voice of Martyrs”

On Monday, October 30, 2023, I sent this document to “Voice of Martyrs” (info@versuchte-christen.org) with the following text:

Dear Voice of Martyrs,

because in the 2023/10 magazine and in many other magazines there are constantly statements made about the persecution of Christians in China that simply do not correspond to the truth, and because at the same time I meet so many Christians who believe the reports from “Voice of Martyrs” more than me, who lived as a Christian in China, can understand, speak and read Chinese, who is married to a Chinese Christian and had completely different experiences in China and knows just as many other people who feel the same way - and is as such honestly annoyed because the whole topic is ultimately also about questions of war and peace – therefore I have written a statement which I recommend and ask you to read (please carefully).

Please forward this email to your colleague responsible for China. I am of course happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to your reaction.

Thank you very much and kind regards,

Simon Bruegmann

24a) Answer from “Voice of Martyrs”

On November 8th, 2023 I received the following answer:

Dear Mr. Brügmann,

Thank you very much for your extensive elaboration on the topic of criticism of China that you sent to us.

You write on the first page that you were previously only aware of allegations against China from Open Doors, but then your attention was also drawn to our magazine “Voice of Martyrs”. In fact, there are of course numerous other, politically and ideologically very different voices that criticize China, such as Amnesty International, the BBC or the previous federal government in the

“Report on the global situation of religious freedom”, to name just a few.

We are of course happy for you and your family that your personal experience looks completely different. Your life in Shanghai and your work give you direct and personal insights and therefore a personal view and assessment of the situation. Your experience, as you describe it, is authentic.

The fact is: China is a very large country in terms of area and population. The situation is, as you know, complex. And of course you will have different experiences. Our approach is different than yours. As the “Voice of Martyrs” we report on Christians who had completely different experiences than you.

One of these experiences is that the government of China is trying to define the framework within which the Church of Jesus should operate with rules and regulations. This leads to the problems we and many other voices have described. And that is our calling as a Martyr Church relief campaign - we help where Christians are suffering. We not only advocate for these Christians, but also give a voice to their faith experiences.

It understandably hurts you that you have had to experience in your community that a brother sees things differently than you and follows our narrative rather than your personal experience. We're sorry. The explanation lies in the complexity of the situation and the complexity of the local conditions. This leads to different descriptions of the different aspects similar to the parable of the blind men and the elephant.

As the Voice of Martyrs, we report in our publications and reports the part that concerns the beleaguered community of Jesus in China (and worldwide) and have no reason to doubt the credibility of our sources. For example, I was able to be in your community in Stuttgart for such a report not so long ago (March 21).

With kind regards,

Yours,

Manfred Müller

Pastor Manfred Müller

Head of Mission | Aid campaign Martyrs Church

Tel.: 06445 61 244 0 | Fax: 06445 61 244 22

m.mueller@versuchte-christen.org | www.verschläge-christen.org

24b) Analysis of the answer

The answer of “Voice of Martyrs” can be simplified as follows

- Regional differences
- Reference to the usual western sources as evidence

As expected, the argument of regional differences is raised again. However, the fact that this doesn't make sense was shown under 7) OD: *Regional differences?*.

Sources were still not named specifically, but were only kept general as before.

What is disappointing, however, is that there was no attempt to answer my refutations, nor was there any insight shown that the statements should at least have been formulated differently. Because: the claims under 8) VM: *Christian internet and convocations forbidden*, 9) VM: *Commenting Christians get punished*, 10) VM: *Buying Christian books is a crime*, 11) VM: *China rigorous in its persecution* and 12) VM: *Religious laws tightened* formulated without restrictions, and yet were

demonstratively and undisputedly refuted. Even if these refutations are considered regional “lucky hits”, they still would require the need to rephrase the statements made.

24c) Reply

Therefore, on August 11, 2023, I replied as follows:

Dear Mr. Müller,

First of all, thank you for your answer, even if it disappoints me very much.

So you counter my accusation that you have taken statements from unnamed sources without checking them with reports from the collective West. The fact that they all unanimously “vote the same horn” still does not make the false statements true.

I have the impression that you didn't read my document at all or didn't read it carefully. Because regardless of which corner of the West and how often such claims are made, I prove irrefutably that

- *Bibles and Christian books can be purchased at: <https://search.suning.com/圣经/>*
- *Bible apps available: <https://www.baidu.com/s?wd=微度圣经>*
- *Audio Bible apps available: <https://www.baidu.com/s?wd=圣经%20audio%20app>*
- *Bible reading websites are accessible: <http://www.chinesebibleonline.com>*
- *Christian content is allowed: <https://www.toutiao.com/video/7289623619811246134/>*

All you have to do is click on the links and you will see that the statement “Christian internet and meetings in unregistered churches are banned in China” is false! In the last video below, click on the speech bubble and expand to the 4th comment on the right, in which someone asks what he is reading (he is reading the Bible), to which someone replies “a life-saving book” and my wife replies “the Bible”. - and you can see that the statement “Christians who make comments on websites are persecuted and punished” is also wrong!

If you want to see that the links listed also work in the same way in China, I would refer you again to my document, the latest version of which is available at <https://qiaowangluo.hopto.org/china.opendoors.pdf> (and also contains our conversation). The most important sections for you are 15) My experience as a Christian in China, 9) VM: Commenting Christians get punished, 12) VM: Religious laws tightened and 7) OD: Regional differences? To find out that the same applies to the statements

- *As do Christians who buy Christian books in stores or online.*
- *“And of course you will have different experiences” (from your email)*

... are simply wrong. Dare and click on these links - then you will also know that the credibility of your sources must be questioned, even if this could mean that the BBC, government reports or Amnesty International etc. cannot be trusted.

I also present to you paragraph 19a) Why is it important to distinguish real from nominal Christians? to your heart so that you can have a better understanding of why not everyone who claims to be a Christian should be believed.

Even if your claimed restrictions only apply to some regions, as you state as an excuse (although neither regional Internet restrictions nor automated IT-controlled monitoring limited to regions make

sense), then why are your formulations in the October magazine absolute, i.e. to all China referring formulated and dramatized, sometimes deliberately manipulative (for example by showing and treating China side by side with North Korea)?

As a pastor and mission leader, are you interested in spreading the truth? Then I expect a counter statement in the next magazine to at least correct the statements that you can refute yourself by clicking on the links, namely that "Christian Internet", "buying Christian books online" or "comments from Christians" are banned in China. And for the future, I expect that no statements will be made without checking and citing sources directly - not just general ones in the sense of "experts say...".

Or do you as the editor of the magazine just want to generate circulation? We will see.

Best regards,

Simon Bruegmann

24d) Second reply of "Voice of Martyrs"

Dear Mr. Brüggmann,

Thank you very much for your recent email. I am sorry that my answer "very disappoints" you.

In my answer to you, I explained how such different assessments can occur in a country like China. My answer to you - as a brother in faith - was appreciative and caring.

However, I am now disappointed in your tone and style. We don't know each other. At no point did you seek a brotherly conversation. You send us an unsolicited statement that was originally intended for Open Doors, which, as you yourself note, you only adapted to us afterwards. You can do it that way - but do you have to do it in this style?

You describe yourself as "honestly annoyed" and think that, in addition to our "editorial failure," you can also identify "deliberate manipulation" and "false statements." You claim for yourself that you have "irrefutably" proven your position.

You describe experiences that you and your wife have had and compare them with the experiences we report on. But that actually confirms what we also say: There are regional differences!

We have hardly covered the topic of China in the last few months. We published the last magazine on China in February. In between, China only appeared in a reference to our exhibition, in an obituary honoring the work for persecuted Christians in the 20th century, as a stopover on a trip and in a project description. I'm surprised you're reacting so emotionally to this.

However, I would like to say something finally: We clearly oppose your accusation that we are deliberately manipulating people in order to get donations. We are very surprised that you are accusing us of this.

Obviously you and we assess the situation in China very differently. As a final thought, a reference to something the Apostle Paul said: "Let everyone be sure of his own opinion." (Romans 14:5). We are - and obviously you are too. We would leave it at that.

Have a blessed weekend!

Best regards,

Yours, Manfred Müller

24e) Analysis of the second answer

I am very surprised that the tone of my email was apparently perceived as too aggressive. From my point of view, it was a matter-of-fact tone, only with a provocation at the end, in the hope that "Voice of Martyrs" would still deal with the content of my refutations and that communication would not break off.

I have already admitted that my claim of "deliberate manipulation" was an unprovable allegation. I expressly apologize for this here in this document (see *13b*) *Correction: "Deliberate" is an allegation*). But at the same time I see that we are no longer making any progress, so I will not send another email and will personally apologize to him when I have the opportunity.

However, one thing must be stated: "Voice of Martyrs" is a widely read magazine and therefore represents an object of public discussion. Anyone who puts public opinions into social circulation via a magazine should not feel personally attacked if they are criticised quasi-publicly .

And finally I would like to notice: again my evidences were dismissed as just other personal experiences and not one word was lost about it.

Therefore, I urge the reader to check the refutations for themselves.

Appendix

The site <https://www.mdbg.net> is ideal for transforming words from English into Chinese in order to be able to generate Chinese characters even if the operating system does not have the character set installed. This allows you to check the searches or words shown.

From my YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@sbrgm/videos> I recommend the following videos (with English subtitles) to better understand China:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oY5GP-m_eEc Controversial: Being a Christian in China
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtXi7E4lpWo> Controversial: are the Chinese polite?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyejkapBLk0> Controversial: Massive Surveillance
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZisgggHMUg> Controversial: Human Rights
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYaW3Ew5j8c> Controversial: How aggressive is China?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83ZrNjAutf0> Controversial: The tyranny of Xi Jinping
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8y-Vl2Rd7NA> Controversial: Smog and pollution
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCIrM59K5_Q The philosophy
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6Wd9ULfeKE> China's infrastructure

For those who are particularly interested, I have put together a playlist here that covers typical (mostly political, and always in English) topics relating to China:

Chinese balloon:

- Geopolitical Economy Report, Chinese balloon was NOT spying, US gov't admits months after fake crisis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgWv3kXUn10>
 - The bizarre secret behind China's spy balloon: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-bizarre-secret-behind-chinas-spy-balloon/>

China's 20th Party Congress:

- Bloomberg, Former China Leader Helped on Stage at Opening Ceremony, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTk-XaE_PVY
- CNN, China's censors blocked CNN while reporting this surprising moment, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HQ_AVAJKE
- Cyrus Janssen: China's 20th Party Congress Explained! Everything You Need to Know: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOBWX_l1wks

About the Chinese "tyranny":

- the Chinese constitution in english: <http://en.npc.gov.cn.cdurl.cn/constitution.html>
- incarceration rate: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_incarceration_rate
- violence comparison between the US and China: <https://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/compare/China/United-States/Crime/Violent-crime>
- U.S. Economist Jeffrey D. Sachs on American Failure <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8RZPqIDG8U>

- 95% of the Chinese are satisfied with their government:

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/07/long-term-survey-reveals-chinese-government-satisfaction/>

Taiwan:

- If you don't know or doubt that Taiwan is a part of China, check out Nathan Rich, "Why the US Protects Taiwan": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8W1WpMQz_o

- Nathan Rich, Is Taiwan a Different China than China?,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o31ttlgPOys>

Uyghurs:

- China Embassy comment about the Uyghurs genocide accusations: http://id.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/sgdt/202206/t20220622_10707637.htm

- Nomadic Tour, Xinjiang Local Women Suddenly Surprised Me With ?:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5dpmaelaZM>

- Gweilo 60, China's Uyghur Genocide Fact or Fiction:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_rsCMsWTjs

Hong Kong:

- Fridaeveryday, How Amnesty International harms Hong Kong (covers also Uyghurs):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uASqc_nHu48

- Fridaeveryday, Two hidden elements reveal the truth about Hong Kong:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4QB1vhiVTM>

General:

- Barett, US Climate Hypocrisy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEMfrCHQmZI>

- Cyrus Janssen, Americans CAN'T Believe What China Built Now!:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nyqNaRRvGM>