

“The Illegality of the Christian Forces under Yang Rongli’s Leadership” Statement by the Linfen Bureau of Religious Affairs in Shanxi

September 27, 2009

Since 1992, the Christian forces under Yang Rongli’s leadership have caused chaos for the TSPM. They have created conflicts with TSPM by using financial issues as a pretext. They attempted to convert the church administration and disrupt the TSPM church. For years they have illegally sent missionaries, appointed pastors, set up fellowship sites, and organized large conferences under the name of “Shanxi Linfen Christian church”. They arrogantly refused to register or obey the commands from the Bureau of Religious Affairs. Even more, they have instigated the church members to besiege the government officials with requests; such acts have disturbed the social order and are very harmful to social stability. Linfen Ethnicity and Bureau of Religious Affairs hereby aims to reveal the truth of their illegal acts.

1. Annual Records of Illegal Activities

In between March and April of 1999, Yang Rongli and Li Yueliang were arrested for operating an illegal business. Yang instigated innocent church members to appeal for help from higher authorities in Linfen. About 7,000 innocent church members signed an appeal for her and threatened to appeal to the authorities in Beijing. This incident negatively influenced the whole Linfen city.

In December of 2000, Yang gathered with Christians from a few churches around Linfen City and held a Christmas party at Wuzhou Market Square in the Raodu District. She neither applied for permission from the Department of Religious Affairs nor took any advice from related government organs. The party caused 3,000 people to gather to watch and disturbed the operation of normal business.

In April of 2002, Yang forcibly occupied the wheat thrashing field to hold a religious gathering. Without permit from the local government or village committee, she organized this gathering and caused a fight between the church members and the non-believers. Yang and her co-workers threatened to summon 30,000 Christians to intrude upon Pingtian Village and fight with the villagers and the communist party members. Yang’s arrogance roused great indignation among the villagers. At the climax of the conflict, Departments of United Front Work, Religious Affairs, Public Security jointly stopped the conflict from escalating. Later, government officials had several talks with Yang to educate and warn her. But the second day Yang held a gathering for hundreds of people regardless.

In September 2003, while Yang was fellowshipping at a church member’s house in Jiakai Village, she had a quarrel with a village cadre, who tried to stop the gathering. Both sides were injured after the conflict. Yang and more than 40 Christians protested at the village committee. Under mediation, the injured church member was paid 1000RMB as compensation. Yang insisted it was not enough and threatened to protest in Jiakai Village with more Christians. Finally, the villagers agreed to pay 10000RMB for medical treatment.

In 2003, with the excuse of gardening, Yang built a 1,000-square meter tent under the names of Cui Jiaxing and Yang Cuilian and made it into a religious site.

In September 2004, Yang and three others encouraged and joined the liberal Christian force in Linyi, Yuncheng City. They volunteered to be representatives of 30 people to appeal to the authorities in Beijing; the demonstrators had a bad influence on the society and were dispersed.

From March to August in 2006, Yang held several illegal gatherings in Puxian, Nangou, Qianbao and Xikaifu and shared the Gospel with minors. Every gathering had more than 60 people; sometimes up to 200 people joined, including many school children.

During Christmas of 2007, Yang illegally held large Christmas parties at the Jiaxing machinery factory, and in Dadeng, Xiangling and Xincheng, and invited 500 to 4000 people to join the parties.

In March of 2008, Yang and her coworkers took advantage of the Olympic period, during which the government focused on harmony. Without any permission or procedure through government organs, they illegally built a church building on the unregistered land. The Departments of Homeland Resource, Urban Development, Labor Resource, Public Security and Religious Affairs tried to stop her from building the church; but she summoned hundreds of Christians to guard the building site and blocked the government officials. By force, they finished building the illegal church “Jindeng Tang”.

During Christmas of 2008, Yang illegally held more than ten Christmas parties at “Jindeng Tang” and invited Christians from Raodu, Yuncheng and Yangquan. The parties had bad influence on society.

This September, Yang adopted the same tactic: she took a chance while the government was preparing for the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of PRC and built an illegal religious site in Fushan. Again, she did not go through any formalities at the government organs. After her conspiracy was uncovered, the Fushan government demolished the illegal building. In order to force the government to comply with their requests, Yang and the misguided church members blocked traffic and threatened to appeal to the upper authorities.

2. Laws and Regulations Violated

Yang Rongli committed the following illegal actions:

a) Illegally Established Religious Groups

In accordance with Article 6 of Regulations on Religious Affairs promulgated by the State Council, “the establishment, alteration, or cancellation of registration, of a religious body shall be registered in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations on Registration Administration of Associations”. Article 8 of Shanxi Regulations on Religious Affairs reads, “for the establishment of an institute for religious education, an application shall be made by the religious body of the municipality where such institute is to be located. Establishment begins after application is proved by the Department of Civil Administration and Religious Affairs. The so called “Shanxi Linfen Christian Church” established by Yang Rongli does not have any registration certificate and should be considered illegal.

b) Illegally Established Religious Sites

In accordance with Article 13 of Regulations on Religious Affairs, “for the preparation for establishing a site for religious activities, an application shall be made by a religious body to the religious affairs department of the people's government at the county level of the place where such site is to be located”. For more than ten years, Yang Rongli has established illegal and nonregistered religious sites at Raodu, Xiangfen and other places. She rented houses and bought discarded land to establish religious sites and never registered to the department of religious affairs. In 2008, she seized the opportunity during Olympic and established “Jindeng Tang”.

c) Illegally held Religious Activities

In accordance with Article 12 of the Regulation, “collective religious activities of religious citizens shall, in

general, be held at registered sites for religious activities”.

According to Shanxi Regulations on Religious Affairs Article 21, “religious body that sponsors large-scale religious activity shall make an application to the religious affairs department of the people's government of the province, autonomous region or municipality directly under the Central Government of the place where such large-scale religious activity is to be held.” Yang and her Christian organization had held many large-scale religious activities in the past ten years and had severely violated the law.

d) Illegally Nominated Religious Personnel

According to The Regulations on Religious Affairs, Article 27 “Religious personnel who are determined qualified as such by a religious body and reported for the record to the religious affairs department of the people's government at or above the county level may engage in professional religious activities”. According to Shanxi Regulations on Religious Affairs Article 17 “Where religious personnel are to be recognized or disqualified, the matter shall, upon consent by the religious body of the religion concerned, be reported to the religious affairs department of the people's government at or above the county level for the record.”

Yang Rongli and the illegal religious personnel had preached, shared the Gospel and held Sunday worship services without reporting to the religious affairs department. They are disqualified to hold any religious activities.

e) Illegally Shared the Gospel to the Young

Constitution of the People's Republic of China, Article 36 “No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state. Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.” Education Law of the People's Republic of China, Article 8 “Educational activities shall conform to the State and public interests. The State separates education from religion. No organization or individual may make use of religion to conduct activities that interfere with the educational system of the State.” Regulations on Religious Affairs, Article 3 “No organization or individual may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the State, or in other activities that harm State or public interests, or citizens' lawful rights and interests.” Yang Rongli and her coworkers had held many youth seminars and trainings, which violated the Constitution, Education Law and Regulations on Religious Affairs.

f) Jeopardized Social Orders

Regulations on Letters and Visits, Article 20 “in the course of writing letters or making visits, abide by laws and regulations, shall not harm the interests of the State, society or the collective or infringe upon the lawful rights of other citizens, shall conscientiously maintain public order and the order in handling letters and visits, and shall not commit the acts of illegally assembling around offices of State organs or public places, encircling and attacking State organs, intercepting official vehicles, or jamming and obstructing traffic”. Law of the People's Republic of China on Assemblies, Processions and Demonstrations Article 7 indicates, “For the holding of an assembly, a procession or a demonstration,

application must be made to and permission obtained from the competent authorities in accordance with the provisions of this Law”; Article 15 “No citizens shall, in a city other than his place of residence, start, organize or participate in an assembly, a procession or a demonstration of local citizens.”

For years, Yang Rongli and the Christian forces under her leadership use “visit” as an excuse to illegally gather church members and encircle State organs. They gathered church members from different cities and severely jeopardized social order.

Summary:

The so called “Shanxi Linfen Christian Church” has violated the Constitution, the Education Law, Regulations on Letter and Visits and Regulations on Religious Affairs. It is an illegal organization held by illegal religious personnel. In order to keep the peace in religious citizens, the government has done a large amount of work. But Yang refuses to realize her error and has insisted on fighting against the law and the government. No matter whom or for whatever reason to express different opinions, there is a bottom line—which is not to violate the law and jeopardize the interest of the people and the nation. Criminals shall be punished.

[Signed]

Linfen Ethnicity and Bureau of Religious Affairs