

## ENDORSEMENTS



### ***Faithful Disobedience***

*Writings on Church and State from a Chinese House Church Movement*

December 6, 2022 | \$28, 288 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0413-5

In this important body of theology, key writings from the Chinese house church movement have been compiled, translated, and made accessible to English speakers. This unique resource will be valuable to practical and political theologians and anyone interested in international relations, political philosophy, history, and intercultural studies.

## A Unique Look Inside a Chinese House Church Movement

“The things that contribute to our understanding of the relations between church and state are not only narrowly exegetical but emerge as well from our experiences as Christians. What the Bible says about such matters is likely to be configured in our minds a little differently by Christians in nineteenth-century Netherlands, tribal peoples in Papua New Guinea, and Han people in China, even though all of us want to live our lives under Christ’s providential ordering of all things in this broken world. Wang Yi and his fellow contributors to this thought-provoking volume write in the full knowledge that theirs is not the only Christian voice in China, let alone elsewhere, but they argue their corner in defense of unregistered churches with exegetical skill, theological rigor, and pastoral insight. Churches in the West have much to learn from them.”

—**D. A. Carson**, emeritus professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“Reverend Wang Yi is a Chinese theologian in pastoral ministry and a public intellectual in social engagement. He is sharp, eloquent, and fearless. Under his leadership, the Early Rain Church expanded the wide reach of the ‘house churches,’ that is the *jiating* churches, in multiple spheres of Chinese society. This collection of writings clearly shows the deepening of Chinese Christian thinking and articulation of biblical, historical, systematic, and practical theology. It is a must-read for anyone interested in Chinese Christianity, society, and culture. It is relevant for all Christians facing restriction, repression, and persecution in the contemporary world.”

—**Fenggang Yang**, founding director of the Center on Religion and the Global East at Purdue University

“For the first time in the English language, we are given access to some of the leading figures in China’s unregistered churches. We hear of lives shaped by the tumultuous history of Christianity in China, wrestling with the church’s relationship with the state and with the society, and pointed toward an eschatological vision that reorients Christians today. This window into the Chinese church is thought provoking and challenges us—whether in China or beyond—in our understanding of faithful Christian living.”

—**Alexander Chow**, University of Edinburgh, author of *Chinese Public Theology*

“Wang Yi’s faithfulness under persecution highlights the gospel by shining a light on injustice and the depth of human depravity. More important is how his example as a suffering faithful servant of God archetypes the ultimate example of the suffering servant of Christ. By the grace of God, how the truthfulness of the gospel—through the suffering servant ministry of Jesus Christ—shines against the dark and hopeless world has been shown in another faithful disobedient servant of God in China.”

—**David Ro**, regional director for the Lausanne Movement East Asia and chair of the Asia 2022 Congress

“This important compendium of house-church writings offers English-language readers and scholars an inside view of the house-church narrative of the arc of Chinese church history. By combining academic essays with church sermons and interviews, the volume draws attention to two key elements in Wang Yi’s writings that have guided his thought and ministry: church-state relations and a theology of martyrdom within an eschatological dimension.”

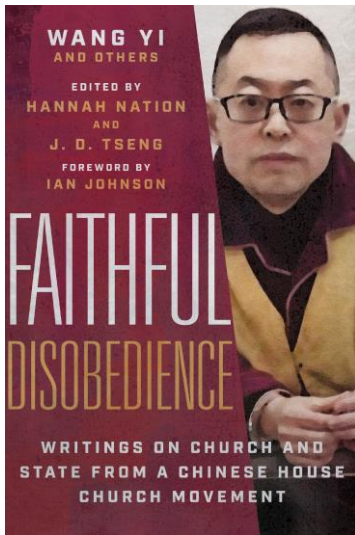
—**Chloë Starr**, professor of Asian theology and Christianity at Yale Divinity School



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“The dynamism of the house church movement in China in the face of difficulty is one of the most compelling and inspiring stories in contemporary history. While the movement as a whole is composed mostly of smaller, low-profile churches, Pastor Wang Yi is a major voice coming from larger, higher-profile church circles. The sobering reality of his current imprisonment calls us all the more to pray for him (and other imprisoned Christians)—and to engage his ideas seriously.”

—**Kevin S. Chen**, associate professor of Old Testament at Christian Witness Theological Seminary in San Jose, California, and author of *The Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch*

“The single, most important feature of global Christianity is the conversation that Christians from a thousand different cultures have with each other. This compelling book brings one of the world’s most dynamic Christian movements into the living rooms of Christians around the world. Pastor Wang Yi’s theological reflections are essential reading for global Christians who want to understand the future of their faith.”

—**Todd M. Johnson**, codirector of Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

“Pastor Wang Yi’s sermons carry the heart of the New Testament Epistles that still echoes down history’s halls. As he covers a wide range of historical, political, cultural, and spiritual topics for his own Early Rain congregation, Pastor Yi warns, prepares, exhorts, and ultimately lives the New Testament reality of costly proclamation. Just as our prayers will strengthen Pastor Yi in his prison cell, this sermon collection will strengthen saints worldwide to endure hardship and scorn for the sake of the kingdom—even amid our own fragile freedom.”

—**K. A. Ellis**, director of the Edmiston Center for the Study of the Bible and Ethnicity

“*Faithful Disobedience* is must-read for anyone who wishes to understand the vitality, scholarship, ethics, and dissident witness of the urban Chinese Christian scholar-leaders in China today. These works by Wang Yi and others carefully weave the spiritual and theological roots of the suffering and witness of early house church leaders such as Wang Mingdao to produce their own unique, informed, and trenchant public witness of truth to power in China today. One simply cannot understand the current relationship between Christianity and the state in China apart from the works represented in this timely collection of essays.”

—**Thomas Harvey**, academic dean of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and author of *Acquainted with Grief: Wang Mingdao’s Stand for the Persecuted Church of China*

“This monumentally important and unique book stands as a primary-source time capsule and also an example par excellence of not only unregistered churches in China but also global indigenous theology. Its unfiltered nature gives the reader a chance to glimpse what is really going on in God’s body around the world, which helps to hone our own self-understanding of what is truly Christian versus what is simply our culture. In addition, it benefits us as learners to not just give but also receive what the Holy Spirit would have for the church.”

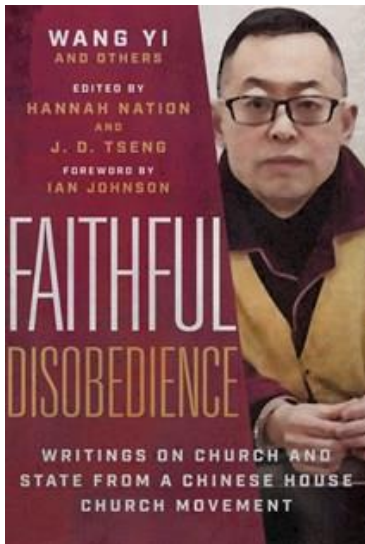
—**Allen Yeh**, associate professor of intercultural studies and missiology at Biola University and author of *Polycentric Missiology: Twenty-First-Century Mission from Everyone to Everywhere*



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## Q & A



### ***Faithful Disobedience***

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**Hannah Nation** is the managing director of the Center for House Church Theology (CHCT). A writer and student of missions history and world Christianity, she is inspired by this historical moment and the privilege of witnessing a new chapter in church history unfold across China. Visit her website at [hannahnation.com](http://hannahnation.com) and CHCT's website at [housechurchtheology.com](http://housechurchtheology.com).

## Chinese House Churches and the Act of “Faithful Disobedience”

### What is the story behind *Faithful Disobedience*?

**Hannah Nation:** Wang Yi, a famous Chinese legal scholar and house church pastor known for his resistance to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and whose incarceration in 2018 was covered by the *New York Times* and other major outlets, has long been working on a collection of writings that define his understanding of the history and beliefs of not only the Chinese house church movement but also eschatological history. These writings are widely available online in Chinese, but they have not been well translated or studied in English to date. *Faithful Disobedience* is an important historical, philosophical, and theological work by house church leaders themselves and culminates in a number of writings by Wang and his church leaders at the time of his arrest.

### What is the thesis of *Faithful Disobedience*?

**Nation:** Wang Yi's thesis is that because Jesus is the Lord of history and because of the manifestation of God's kingdom on earth, the church ought not to submit to any power that claims the ultimate allegiance and love of its people. If the church finds itself existing under a power that demands people's hearts, then “faithful disobedience” becomes a necessary response by Christians. As an editor of *Faithful Disobedience* with J. D. Tseng, my thesis is that Wang Yi's theology is relevant beyond the Chinese context and worth considering by all global Christians who face the temptations of nationalism, totalitarianism, and syncretism.

### What are the top three contributions this book makes to the scholarly community?

**Nation:** This is the first collection of Wang Yi's writings published in English. Wang Yi has been written about by scholars at places such as Yale, Purdue, and Edinburgh, but to date there is no published collection of his writings in English. *Faithful Disobedience* should be the first book from a Chinese house church theologian in every academic library. Wang Yi's theology might be understood as “post-postcolonial,” an idea that I raise in my editor's conclusion. This makes it a very new contribution to scholarship on global theology. This book also provides a house church historiography of the events of the twentieth century that birthed the Chinese house church.

### How did you come to work on this project?

**Nation:** I have edited several books and written many articles about house church leaders in China. My interest stems from my experience working with Chinese pastors, particularly through the excellent translation work done by China Partnership's translation team. I've seen firsthand the remarkable sermons, books, and letters these pastors have written in the midst of not only intensifying government pressure and pandemic restrictions but also church growth and multiplication amid growing disillusionment with the government and with modern Chinese society.

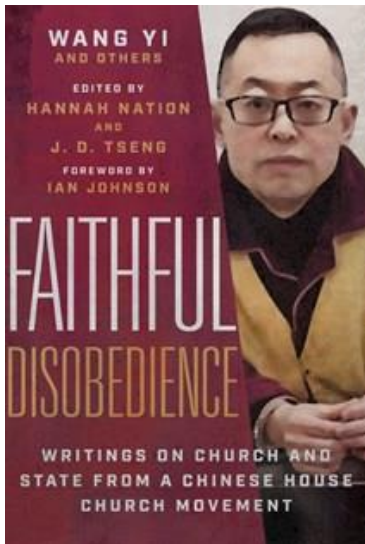


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**Alexander Chow**, University of Edinburgh, author of *Chinese Public Theology*

#### **Who is *Faithful Disobedience* written for?**

**Nation:** This book will pique the interest of scholars of political and/or public theology, global Christianity, and Chinese history. For those who are already familiar with Wang Yi, who can be a controversial figure, it will add an important piece to the conversation about his political and theological reasons for his resistance to the government. It will also hopefully introduce a much broader array of Christian and secular scholars—political scientists, sociologists, religious studies scholars, philosophers, theologians, etc.—to Wang Yi and the conversation in China around church and state. Finally, there will be many non-scholarly readers who are interested because of the topic of the persecuted church and the media attention that Wang Yi’s arrest garnered.



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