

# the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

He just turned 18 earlier this month. Yet he has a generation of loyal followers, and his political influence challenges one of the most powerful nations in the world. Meet Joshua Wong.

Wong has emerged as the leader of the student-led, pro-democracy protests that have been going strong in Hong Kong for the past two months. When the British gave up the rule of this island to China in 1997, Hong Kong was promised that its citizens would be able to freely choose its leaders and have a system of government separate from the Communist regime in Beijing, China. Wong and his followers believe that these promises have been broken.

Wong was only 14 when he rose to prominence. He founded Scholarism in May of 2011. This movement successfully led a campaign against the teaching of Communist propaganda in Hong Kong schools. Members of Scholarism held a sit-in at the Hong Kong government headquarters at that time, forcing the government to retract its plans to introduce its so-called Moral and National Education.

The current protest centers on Beijing’s attempt to control the elections for Hong Kong’s leaders. While China agreed that Hong Kong could choose its leaders, the Communist nation has imposed tight selection criteria to ensure that only Communist party loyalists can run for office.

“Every citizen should have the right to nominate a candidate for chief executive,” says Wong. “Students and youth have more passion and more power to be involved in this movement. Young people expect more change, and they dream to have a better political structure for the future.”

Traditionally, Hong Kong has focused more on making money than making waves. China’s leaders often describe Hong Kong as an economic entity and not a political one. The hope was that this island territory would quietly accept Communist rule and go about its business. But Wong and his generation of students have challenged that idea. Polls show that young people here increasingly identify themselves as “Hong Kongers” first and not just Chinese. They also have more global values and a desire for Western-style liberal democracy.

Wong’s desire for freedom and democracy reportedly come from his Christian values. His parents are Christians and are happy that he lives by the values he has been taught all his life. “We have always brought up Joshua to be compassionate, caring, principled, and loyal,” say Wong’s parents. “We are very proud of all that he is doing to make Hong Kong a better place for his generation and our generation.”

*As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:*

**Describe some of the power struggles that you see in this article. Talk about some of the people, organizations, and institutions mentioned that have power and how they choose to use it.**

**Imagine that you had the power to make big changes in your school, community, or nation. How would you choose to use that power? What would you hope to accomplish?**

**A Chinese teen may seem like an unlikely person to hold the power to influence the future of Hong Kong. But the Bible tells us of a woman who seemed to be an unlikely person to shape the future of her people. Let’s look at how Esther attained and used her power as a queen of a mighty empire.**