

Christian Persecution Intensifies Around the Globe

The Bible is clear: “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12).

Vicious persecution against Christians worldwide has skyrocketed in the last few years. Just the other morning on television I saw a Christian pastor maligned by journalists because he dared to call people “sinners.” In other words, we are now targeted for stating even the most basic tenets of our faith including, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Ro. 3:23).

God in His love has provided a Savior for sinners. But only those who acknowledge their condition can receive cleansing. As the apostle Paul said, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Tim 1:15). Yet this greatest of all love stories—the gospel itself—is being vehemently accosted here in America and worldwide.

The recent maelstrom of violence throughout the **Middle East** directly affects Christians and churches. Pastors especially are targeted. Please pray for grace, courage, and boldness for Messianic Jews and Arab Christians living in this volatile region. The recent release of Iranian pastor Youcef Nardarkhani is a ray of hope in an otherwise bleak picture. He, his family, and church need our prayers—now perhaps even more than when he was imprisoned.

Many of the pastors Global Advance equips live under constant threat. Their families are often harassed and persecuted. When we come with hope, training, and encouragement they realize they are not forgotten by the rest of the global church.

By God’s grace we will continue to strengthen the hands of frontline leaders who suffer for their faith in Jesus Christ

and their proclamation of the gospel. You can help encourage these heroes of the faith in three ways:

1. *Identify with them.* We dare not try to hide in our relative comfort and security here. Mordecai reminded his privileged niece, Esther, that “playing it safe” isn’t safe (see Esth. 4:13-14). We are to identify with our brothers and sisters who suffer and “weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15). Many are imprisoned with their only “crime” being their commitment to Jesus. “Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as though you yourselves were suffering” (Heb. 13:3, NIV).
2. *Pray for them.* Believers prayed for imprisoned Peter and God brought an angel to deliver him (see Ac. 12:5-11). When we are threatened we should pray for boldness (Ac. 4:31). When we refuse to be intimidated by the Gospel’s enemies, it is a sign for them of their coming perdition (Phil. 1:28).
3. *Strengthen them with training and encouragement.* Global Advance has earmarked the Persecuted Church Fund to be used exclusively to train, resource, and bring hope to believers who are threatened for their loyalty to Jesus.

Jesus said, “Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matt. 25:40).