

Iranian Pastors Risk Lives for Training

If the Iranian government knew Christians were learning how to grow a church in the middle of their Muslim nation, the converts could lose their freedom—or worse, their lives.

But that hasn't stopped pastors with the underground church in Iran from secretly attending classroom sessions led by Dave Anderson, a founder and longtime trainer for EQUIP, the organization led by Christian leadership guru John Maxwell.

"Some of them are arrested trying to leave Iran to attend training and some are arrested when they try to re-enter," says Anderson who has taught biblical leadership in 13 other countries. "Some are on death lists, but they still come."

The pastors, many of whom are business people or related to high-ranking government officials, travel to a secret location to learn how to grow their churches, build a team and find people to join their churches.

Anderson says the idea behind EQUIP's curriculum is to pass it on to others. "We teach the most influential people," he says. "And they teach other people, who then teach it to others—and it really has an exponential effect."