

Satan's Deceptive Containment Strategy

During recent travels with an Open Doors colleague from Central Asia, he described an interesting dynamic in one of the countries he serves that is very opposed to the message of Christ. (For security reasons, I won't name the colleague or specific country.)

There's a group of believers there known by local authorities. In many of the areas where we work, the local authorities seek to extinguish any presence of Christians or their faith. However, in this region, the local officials took a different tact.

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These authorities communicated to the believers that if they keep their Christianity quiet and agree not to let it be shared with those around them, the local officials will leave them alone. The officials recognize they may not be able to get these believers to renounce their faith in Christ, so they've settled for the next best thing—containment of their faith. In other words, they recognized trying to contain the faith of the believers was a more effective strategy than seeking to extinguish it.

As my colleague shared these stories from Central Asia, I couldn't help but wonder if this is a similar tactic to what our enemy, the devil, has adopted in our churches here in the West. Scripture warns us that "the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8b, NIV). We don't need to look far beyond our communities, families and even our own experiences to know how true this is.

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Nor do we need to look far beyond those same experiences to see how very true this tactic of containment may be.

In many cases, the devil may not be seeking to get us to walk away from our faith; he may only be seeking to keep us from sharing it. However, Scripture makes it clear that our faith and fruit are linked.

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