

Should American Church Beware Fate of Evangelicals in Iran?

In Ward 350 of Iran's notorious Evin Prison, American pastor Saeed Abedini is incarcerated with 30-40 other prisoners, twice the legal limit for this section of the prison.

The authorities arrested Saeed while he was working in Iran, with permission from the government, to help build an orphanage for children. According to the Iranian state, his crime is endangering national security—really just trumped-up charges. What was the real danger? The fact that he is an **evangelical Christian** and that is a threat to Islam.

Sept. 26, just a few weeks from now, will mark Saeed's one-year anniversary in Evin Prison. In conditions unimaginable for most of us, he has been relentlessly interrogated, psychologically harassed and physically beaten—even resulting in internal bleeding and injuries. Twice he has faced solitary confinement.

Saeed is Iranian-born but an American citizen. He, his wife, Naghmeh, and their two children live here in the United States. Thanks to Naghmeh's relentless efforts—and the **prayers** of a number of believers—Saeed's plight is gaining the attention of the world. His internal injuries have finally been treated, but the outcome for him is still uncertain.

I don't know if believers in our own country will ever experience this degree of **persecution**, but I do know that our **religious freedoms** are being seriously eroded. The Bible tells us that Christians should expect persecution by the world: "All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be **persecuted**" (2 Tim. 3:12, ESV).

Our children can't **pray** aloud in public schools. Students who speak openly about Jesus Christ at public assemblies have

their microphones shut off. Our military is hostile to soldiers who share and practice their faith, and even atheists now aim to become “chaplains” in America’s armed forces.

In a nation that was founded by believers seeking the freedom to practice their religion, Christians are now routinely targeted by our courts and government for reasons related to their faith in Jesus Christ. Rarely is a Christian portrayed in a positive light by the media.

All of this has resulted in a nation that is quickly hurtling toward a moral Armageddon. **Homosexual activists** and **abortionists** have their so-called rights protected and upheld, while Christians are becoming the victims of our country’s growing intolerance and misguided zeal for pluralism. The name of Jesus Christ—which Christians love—is increasingly hated by our culture.

This is why I am so excited about the opportunity all of us have this fall to join with my father in a nationwide evangelistic effort, My Hope America With Billy Graham. This is something everyone can be a part of. It will be the largest evangelistic outreach of his lifetime. I encourage you to get involved now and make sure your church is involved. It starts with prayer. Individuals and churches sincerely and urgently praying—for the lost around you, for our nation, for Pastor Saeed and for other persecuted Christians around the world—will make a difference.

We’re not at this stage yet, but we must realize that our nation is not as far as we may think from some of what is happening in Iran today. The Scriptures say, however, that “if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face ... then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14). Revival begins in the heart of God’s people, confessing their own sins and seeking the Lord.

That happened on a number of occasions in the Old Testament, when a spiritually decadent Israel repented of their sins and once again sought God's favor and blessing. God was gracious to heal and forgive, and I do believe He can do the same for this country now.

Christians who live boldly for Christ, even in the face of opposition, are a strong witness to a morally bankrupt society. The My Hope America With Billy Graham outreach is one opportunity not only to take a stand, but to take action.

So remember to **pray** for Pastor Saeed and his family and for thousands of others who are also persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ. And take steps today to join with us in this great evangelistic outreach to our own nation that will reach its high point in November.

More than 18,000 churches across America are already taking part, along with tens of thousands of individual Christians like you, and more are added every day. It's a huge task requiring enormous resources—we need your prayers and gifts, and especially your personal participation.

Click here to read the original story at .