

Global Christians Unite for Luke 6:27 Mandate

How should Christians love their enemies and respond to the growing wave of genocide and persecution around the world?

Over 600 Christian leaders from 130 countries are gathering behind closed doors for the first-time next week to plan a strategic, global response as part of the World Summit in Defense of Persecuted Christians.

The invitation-only event in Washington is sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization and is scheduled for May 10-13 but the delegates are already arriving.

Besides planning and organizing an emergency response to the persecution and genocide crisis, the conference has four stated purposes: 1. Help change public policy that promotes discrimination against Christians, harassment and persecution, 2. Find ways to increase diplomatic pressure on the violating states, 3. Inform and mobilize Christians to address President Trump and their elected officials to take stronger American action against the increasing persecution, 4. Comfort and help the victims respond in a biblical manner.

Government restrictions, harassment and persecution of Christians and other minority religious groups soared in 2015-2016 according to the non-partisan Pew Research Center. Restrictions on religion were rated high or very high in 40 percent of the countries worldwide, up from 34 percent in 2014.

Washington was chosen as the site for the Summit because it provides high security with friendly media coverage and a host government legally committed to upholding religious freedom because of the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act.

Franklin Graham, organizer of the event, issued a statement explaining his purpose in sponsoring the event, "I want the politicians to see firsthand what's taking place. I want to put a big spotlight on the Christians around the world who are being persecuted, who are being tortured."

He also urged Americans to contact President Trump and their elected officials to increase enforcement of the International Religious Freedoms Act of 1998 by appointing an Ambassador at Large to address human rights violations. The post is now vacant.

According to Open Doors USA, the world's top 10 violators of religious freedom are North Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Eritrea. Over 95 percent of the governments in the Muslim Middle East North Africa countries used force against religious minorities in 2015.

Graham called on Christians to organize prayer for those enduring persecution, prison, rape and violence for the sake of Jesus Christ. {eo}

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