

How God Is Moving in Syria Despite Heartbreaking Persecution

In this exclusive interview with Charisma News, Jane (not her real name), a Syrian Christian, gave us a firsthand account of what it's like to be a Christian in the war-torn country during this dangerous and uncertain time.

Charisma News: The media reported on the events in Damascus where 1,100 people were gassed on Wednesday, Aug. 21 ... but is that the full story?

Jane: Actually, we read everything, and we said to our people here that most of the media lie about what happened. We know there's a lot of kidnapping of people. We know a guy who was kidnapped, and he said there were hundreds of bodies, and a lot of children and women were kidnapped. Many times they burn them, take pictures and show villagers, and everyone's talking about this. That may have happened, but we don't know the real truth. Yesterday the UN, in a closed meeting, said, "We don't have any information that the Assad soldiers did that. And we already have a group from the UN inside Syria, and they don't find any proof, so we remain until there is proof toward this situation." Both sides may use chemicals, and we are sure the rebels are using the chemicals because we are there.

Charisma News: What do you see God doing despite all the persecution and what's being reported?

Jane: We are now experiencing that this is the best spiritual time for Syria and other countries, like Egypt, because as much as their suffering is great, they are growing. We experience how refugees run away from their places because of the bombing from the government. They came to the churches, and they came to find the truth of the real God.

Many of the Muslim families came to our church and told us, "We don't know if this is the real Islam." We said, "Yes, this is Islam. This is what they teach in Quran." They said, "We don't want to follow Muhammad anymore. We don't want Islam. We want to know the real God." So we share with them how much Christ loves them; we follow up with them, share the gospel and give them New Testaments; and we help them with their needs, such as food and other things. Thank God, we saw how He is moving among those families that before the war we couldn't reach; many of them didn't even know there are Christians in this country, that they are covered. [They] didn't even know what Christian means. It's very hard. So we thank God, everything happens because of His goodness.

We saw that this war is not from God because of how much the terrorists came and tried to strip the Christians, telling them to go out from the country—"This is our country. It's our country." At the same time, we are experiencing how much evil is active now because there is a big change on the other side, where we have a lot of opportunities to show Jesus Christ. And we have one prayer a day for the country for six months, inviting people from all denominations—and we pray with them for the country. And when we pray, we pray for Sunni and Shia and Christians and Jews and other religions. We pray for all denominations, and we pray for all people. God will open the door from this prayer to make resolutions among Sunni and Shia.

We believe God is doing miracles because He promised us from 2004 that a big revival is coming. It wasn't like we were expecting. We expected big places, a crowd of people would come to the place. But His way is opposite, not like our ways, because this is through the war. Thank God, at the same time, we believe that somebody is being saved. We are waiting and believe that God will change the situation for victory, and we are using the suffering time that believers get stronger and people come more. Even though we have a lot problems, a lot of

suffering, a lot of hurting, we still, we can't do anything but stand still.

Charisma News: How can we pray for the situation there?

Jane: American believers have to wake up and know that there are other members of the body who are suffering. It's very important to have more information about what's happening on the other side because suffering is caused by the people who are supported by your government, by your taxes and your money.

It's very hard for us when we are walking on the street and there are a lot of mortars above our heads and around us. Thank God He protects the believers. But this is the life we are living now. We walk down the street, and we don't know if we will come back to our home or not. Everyone is going from Syria. We are leaving our home, and we don't know if we will come back. It's a very hard life because every moment we are expecting death. We hear of tortures, kidnappings, 500 die, 700 die, 200 die. This is a big problem. My area now is very dangerous, but we're still alive, thank God.

You have to pray for awakening of your government. Because one day those people who are supported by your government, they will kill your people. Believe me, this is their aim. This is their goal. We want you to pray for that, that the country will stop the killing, stop the Syrian forces, that terrorists will not be supported by the Turkish board or the Muslim board. It's very hard for us when we heard how much people come against our country. It's very, very dangerous for us.

Please pray that God will stop the terrorists and not let them enter any more. Already we have many terrorists—from Afghanistan, Libya, Egypt and many areas.

At the same time, we are expecting more and more people coming to Jesus Christ, and we want you to pray for distributing the gospel. Thank God He is using us to share the Good News during

this time to so many people.

We want you to pray also for the children, for the situation, the economic situation. People are very down. People don't work now. Prior to the situation, if someone has any problem, they can't go to the police station because the police station is controlled by the terrorists, and we can't have any solutions from the government. We need real protection and for God to stop this war.

Charisma News: Like you say, the reality of death is everywhere. I'm sure every time you step out, there is a supernatural protection on you.

Jane: We are teaching our children to love and forgive, even though they might see evil. We teach that even if others do bad things to us in front of them, they need to forgive and know that whatever happens, we will meet in heaven soon. Sadly the terrorists teach the children in their area to kill and cut the heads off the Christians in the name of God. They line them up and teach them how to do that.

The terrorists are all over this country. We teach our children that we will see some blood, we will have some pain, but He will open the heavens, and we will enjoy being with Jesus and angels, and we will say to those people, "I forgive you, God loves you, Jesus loves you." Many times God uses our words to touch their hearts.

We need your prayers. We are blessed by this suffering, and we are aim at winning. Though we are really worried about what's happened in America. The Christians, the believers there, are sleeping. They don't know anything about the suffering in other countries.

We are not supporting the regime, but we know that the regime with people is much better, and we can accept it as Sunni and other. Before, we had a big freedom to worship God and no one would stop us—Muslim or other nations—because we had the

freedom from our government.

I had a female friend who was once asked, "Why do you get the New Testament in school?" She's a believer from a Muslim background. The principal of the school is against her, but the government agreed that the people who are following what is written in the New Testament are the best and follow exactly what is written. "Go, and no one can stop you because of this book. We support printing it, and everyone who wants to read it can read it. Call me if someone stops you." We have a lot of stories like this. In the end, people who produce the New Testament get protection from the Secret Police because it is very legal to distribute them in our country.

We had freedom before, Assad gave freedom to all religion. In the last 10 years, Saudi Arabia was building Mosques in Syria like crazy. They have more mosques in Syria than Saudi Arabia. But we the Christians also had freedom to worship.