

Pentecostals, Evangelicals Most Persecuted Group of Christianity

Pentecostals and evangelicals are the most persecuted branch of Christianity, a new report says.

“Protestant evangelical and Pentecostal Christians are more likely to be persecuted than mainline Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox Christians or other Christians associated with ancient churches. In response to persecution, evangelical and Pentecostal Christians are more likely to engage in strategies of survival or, on rare occasions, confrontation,” reads the report by Under Caesar’s Sword.

UCS is a three-year, collaborative global research project that investigates how Christian communities respond when their religious freedom is severely violated.

In 2016, Christianity was ranked as the most persecuted religion in the world. In those same figures, Islamic State murders of Christians accounted for 30 percent of the persecution.

UCS gives three reasons to account for the horrific acts committed against believers.

- In many countries, evangelicals and Pentecostals are comparatively recent arrivals and thus have not established patterns of relating to surrounding populations and governments to the same degree as churches with decades or centuries of history in a given region.
- Evangelicals and Pentecostals are often perceived to be supported by co-religionists and allies in the West.
- Evangelicals and Pentecostals tend to understand

evangelism and conversion as verbal, urgent and sometimes dramatic processes and, consequently, expect and are prepared to endure persecution.

Though the pattern doesn't always unfold in every country, it's especially true in Iran and Russia.

Russia recently implemented an "anti-terrorism" law that many people interpret as a front to jail and prosecute missionaries spreading the good news.

The former Soviet Union also just banned Jehovah's Witnesses, whom they deem as extremist.

To combat the violence against Christ-followers, UCS recommends "Churches need to understand their global responsibility for Christians under persecution and achieve unity across Christian communities in supporting persecuted minorities. Particular stress should be placed on building bridges connecting traditional Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox churches with evangelical and Pentecostal groups."

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