

Radical Islamists Agendas Working to Turn Hearts of Christian Schoolchildren

It's been a weird week of arrests so far in Turkey's obsession to purge out coup supporters. Three citizens were arrested for allegedly insulting Turkish President Erdogan on social media. And 22 lawyers were also jailed for supposed links with the Gulen movement, which Turkey suspects was behind last year's failed coup.

We've talked about how in Turkey's political climate, Christians are often caught in the middle, targeted by both the government and their Muslim neighbors. American pastor Andrew Brunson is still in jail in Turkey with a murky set of charges against him.

But Steve Van Valkenburg with Christian Aid Mission says the rising tension and nationalism in Turkey is also hurting another group of people: Christian kids. He explains:

In Turkey, the schools are becoming more and more indoctrination centers for Islam, and they've sort of always been that. ... They see regular schools as their way of indoctrinating kids for their brand of Islam.

I know one Christian in Turkey who said his third-grade boy came home and said, "Why do we have to be Christians?" because at school, he is always singled out. He's the only Christian in the class and the teacher always singles him out. ... and it's sort of OK for the kids to pound him and beat him up.

I know another child, a Christian, in Turkey that did very well [in school]. He was the top of his class, and the school would never acknowledge it; they never acknowledged he was

the top of the class. They would acknowledge everybody else, but not him, because he was a Christian in the class.

It begs the question, if you're a Christian parent in Turkey, what are your options?

It's really a problem to know. Some Christian parents will move away and they'll move to an area where they think there's better schools, but a lot of parents can't do that. And that's a problem too when people in these countries become Christians, their kids are caught in the middle. ... In the classroom, the teacher can do whatever they want to the kid, and the teacher knows they're protected by the government because the government is not favorable to the Christian kid.

One solution is to find a private school for Christian kids in Turkey to attend. But parents' finances don't always translate into affording private school fees. That's where Christian Aid comes in.

"One thing we're trying to do is raise funds for the children of Christians so they can find a better solution for their children; so they can attend probably some kind of a private school where the teachers are not Muslim. That's very hard to find, but there are some like that," Van Valkenburg said.

Please pray for Christian children in Turkey, that they would be strong in their young faith and would even be guided by their parents on how to share their faith with their peers.
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