

Report: 14,000 Christians Martyred Annually

As Christians prepare to participate in the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on Sunday (or any Sunday in November), Gospel for Asia (GFA) reports that more than 14,000 people around the world annually are martyred for their faith. This number includes only reported cases.

This week's *Road to Reality*, the GFA-sponsored radio program, features a passionate and informative message about the reality of the **persecuted church** by Dr. K.P. Yohannan, GFA founder and international president. The 25-minute presentation on the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church is available online.

"Jesus promised His church that there would be persecution and tribulations," Yohannan says. "Tens of thousands of believers, missionaries and pastors are experiencing the reality of persecution on a daily basis. Yet they recognize the honor it is to suffer for His sake. May the Lord lead us with His burden to intercede for these brothers and sisters."

The **persecution of Christians** takes both physical and mental forms. Many are beaten or deprived of food to the point of starvation. Others suffer misunderstanding or mental torture. Parents have turned children out of their homes, and schools have refused to allow students to return, all because of claiming the name of Jesus. Houses are burned, clothes are destroyed and many are ultimately killed.

Earlier this month, the elder of a GFA-sponsored church in Nepal was murdered while praying for the sick. In September, innocent worshippers at a historic church in Pakistan scrambled for safety as two suicide bombers left 81 dead and 140 injured.

In the India state of Odisha in 2008, more than 500 Christians were killed, and some 50,000 were driven into the jungles. More than 4,000 Christian homes were destroyed, and dozens of churches were ransacked or burned out. These believers faced these attacks all because they had turned to Christ. Many lost everything they owned.

“Sometimes, even as we pray for the persecuted, the **Holy Spirit** reveals to us that we can be part of the answer to our own prayers,” Yohannan says. “Many who heard of the persecution in Odisha and prayed for the victims also sent donations to furnish lost clothing, replace burned Bibles, construct a house of worship for them and rebuild their simple homes.”

Churches are urged to emphasize the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church during a Sunday service this Sunday (or anytime in the month). Individuals, small groups and congregations around the world will make the entire month of November a special time of prayer.

Free resources for churches and individuals at include practical ways Christians can pray for the persecuted, church bulletin inserts and a three-minute video designed to be shown in a church service. Yohannan also has a special message on the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

Road to Reality offers a 2014 calendar, “A Year of Intercession,” at , with proceeds going to the persecution fund. The weekly broadcast airs on more than 800 radio stations in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

“To understand what it means to take up our cross and follow Christ, we must walk in His footsteps,” Yohannan says. “Join Christians around the world in spending time praying and fasting in tears over a map of the world where our fellow believers are suffering for their faith.”