

Forged in Fire: How Persecution Strengthens the Christian Faith

Every attempt they make to stamp out our faith only makes our fire burn even brighter. Long ago, a Roman emperor named Nero would feed Christians to lions during gladiator matches, and he would actually light his garden parties by using the dead bodies of Christians as human torches.

But Christianity spread through his empire like wildfire anyway. In our time, 380 million Christians are facing high levels of persecution.

They are burning our churches, they are abducting our women and our children, they are putting us into concentration camps, and they are executing more of us every day. But they can't stop the gospel. In India, the percentage of the population that is Christian has more than doubled over the last decade even though persecution has become extremely intense.

For example, on one recent Sunday a mob of about 200 crazed lunatics stormed a church and started beating worshippers with iron rods.

Fifty Christians were attacked during a Sunday service in Rajasthan state in western India, when a group of about 200 people stormed a church building in Bikaner city. Several attendees sustained injuries after being struck with iron rods, and the assailants vandalized the property before police arrived.

In the attack, which took place near the end of the service, three worshipers were severely injured on Feb. 16, while many others bore bruises across their bodies, reported the group

Christian Solidarity Worldwide last week.

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No matter how many bruises they put on our bodies, it will do nothing to stop the spread of our faith.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, 70 Christians had their heads cut off by violent radicals earlier this month.

The beheaded bodies of 70 Christians were found in a Protestant church in North Kivu Province in the Congo (DRC) around Feb. 15, several religious freedom advocates said, blaming the extremist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).

The ADF is accused of approaching homes in Mayba, in the Lumbero territory, beginning Feb. 12 and capturing as many as 100 Christians through Feb. 15, marching them to a Protestant church in Kasanga affiliated with the Evangelical Community in Central Africa 20 (CECA 20), binding and beheading them, reported advocates including Open Doors, International Christian Concern (ICC) and Aid to the Church in Need (ACN).

The February massacre followed a January attack, reportedly by ADF, that killed 15, ICC reported.

What they are doing won't work.

Today, more than 90% of the population in the Democratic Republic of Congo is Christian. In fact, it has become one of the most Christian nations on the entire planet.

In North Korea, an all-out attempt to completely eradicate Christianity has been going on for decades, but groups of Christians still exist.

Recently, government thugs were able to discover the location where one group of underground believers was meeting.

This persecution is part of a major sweep against underground Christians in an area of North Korea that we can't identify, as it wouldn't be safe to do so. These secret believers were gathered for a meeting and, once they began worshipping, security guards broke in and arrested everybody. Not only were these Christians executed, it is believed that over 100 members of their families have been rounded up and sent to political camps. It is a common fear tactic in North Korea to extend a punishment not just to the supposed culprit, but also their loved ones.

Are you willing to face the same sort of persecution?

Are you willing to die for what you believe?

Defectors that were recently returned to North Korea from China were automatically sent to concentration camps "if there was any evidence that they had read the Bible or heard Christian doctrine."

The authorities found that the ten defectors had either contacted Christian groups in China, provided information about North Korea to other countries (such as South Korea or the U.S.), or attempted to go to South Korea.

In particular, defectors were automatically sent to the camps if there was any evidence that they had read the Bible or heard Christian doctrine. Any North Korean who comes into contact with Christianity, even once, risks being sent to a political prison camp, which is tantamount to a life sentence.

Most people in the western world cannot imagine what it would be like to spend even a single day in one of these concentration camps.

Christians are considered to be “enemies of the state”, and they are shown no mercy whatsoever.

But for many Christians – including any amongst the group recently sent to political prison camps – there is little hope of release. They are in what’s called a Kwan-li-so – a ‘total control zone’. Prisoners are considered ‘enemies of the state’ and beyond the protection of the law. If not secretly executed, they endure lives of unending physical and psychological torture, hunger and labour. They may even be used for chemical tests.

The Christian faith is the most persecuted faith in the history of the world.

And it has been this way since the time of the apostles. The following is an excerpt from my new book entitled “Why.”

Peter was crucified upside down on a Roman cross.

Andrew was crucified on a Roman cross.

James the son of Zebedee was murdered with a sword because he would not deny what he believed.

John the son of Zebedee was put in prison, repeatedly tortured, and eventually exiled for what he was preaching, but he ultimately died a natural death.

Philip was crucified on a Roman cross.

Bartholomew was executed for preaching the gospel.

Thomas was murdered with a spear while he was preaching the gospel in India.

Matthew was murdered with a sword in Ethiopia.

James the son of Alphaeus was crucified on a Roman cross.

Thaddaeus died after he was shot with arrows for preaching the gospel.

Simon the Zealot was crucified on a Roman cross.

They tried to wipe out the Christian faith in the first century, but it didn't work.

And they have been trying to wipe us out ever since then, but they have failed.

No matter how many of us they kill, our faith will continue to spread because it is the truth.

Here in the United States, some amazing things are starting to happen. Revival meetings have been happening on college campuses all over the nation, and thousands upon thousands of college students have been getting saved.

The organization Unite US has been at the forefront of these gatherings, with events drawing thousands of students. Tonya Prewett, the founder of the organization, highlighted the growing participation.

"We started at Auburn University, we had 5,000 students show up, we had over 200 get baptized," Prewett said. "We next went to FSU—Florida State, the second biggest party school in the nation. We had 4,500 students come and we had about 350 students get baptized at that event."

Other ministries are also reporting increased engagement. According to InterVarsity, decisions for Christ rose by 33% last year.

I am particularly impressed by what has been going on at Ohio

State.

The Ohio State football team may have won the national championship, but the move of God that is happening on campus is far more significant.

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Spiritual awakening actually marked the entire season at Ohio State. Egbuka and other players had begun their season by leading thousands of students in a campus-wide testimony service, which resulted in 50 baptisms.

And one month after Ohio State won the championship, a massive revival was held on campus in which nearly 2,000 students chose Christ in one night.

If you are a skeptic, how do you explain the relentless spread of the Christian faith all over the globe despite endless attempts to eradicate it?

The Christian faith is the most popular faith in the world by a very wide margin, and the Bible is the best selling book in history by a very wide margin.

Everything that they do to try to stop us only makes us stronger.

Even in the midst of all the chaos and all the darkness in our world today, God is moving, and I believe that the best is still yet to come.

Michael Snyder's new blockbuster entitled "Why" is available in paperback and for the Kindle on , and you can subscribe to his Substack newsletter at .

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