

Amid Christian Persecution, There Is Good News in the Middle East

At the recent meeting at the United Nations highlighting the persecution of Christians, there was a surprisingly positive report from one presenter who said that the church is growing in Iran, in spite of or because of the persecution of Christians by Muslims.

As already reported, there is plenty of bad news from the region. Each year, 100 million Christians suffer persecution, imprisonment and even death for their sacred religious beliefs. According to The Voice of the Martyrs, a ministry dedicated to assisting the persecuted church worldwide, “more people have died for their faith in Christ in the last 100 years” than in the previous 19 centuries combined.

While it seems in some countries we are literally seeing watching the genocide of Jesus’ followers in the Middle East, the Iranian speaker who now lives in the United States says the church is growing largely because of Christian television being beamed into the country. There is a real spiritual vacuum; people long for a spiritual reality that Islam cannot provide.

Recently I interviewed Christian leaders from three different Muslim nations. One source explained to me that ISIS considers moderate Muslims as infidels, so they also have a “price to pay.” As Shia and Sunni Muslims fight each other, “a Shia mosque being destroyed (one day) and the next day a Sunni mosque being destroyed (isn’t uncommon),” he told me. “And in between, of course, Christians were being smashed especially when they are located under the region of ISIS. So, in general, the Christians are paying a very high price, but

other Muslims are suffering too, especially those like the Yazidi people. They pay a very high price exactly like the Christians because they are considered as infidel from the ISIS groups.”

But, now for some good news. For their security, I am giving no names and being ambiguous about locations. For authenticity, I’m quoting my sources as much as possible within the bullet points. Let the facts speak for themselves. To my knowledge, these stories have never before been reported.

- “The good part of the story, is that God is using this to change the perspective of Christians in front of many Muslims. God is using this to open the eyes and ears of many Muslims to see the reality of who God is. God is not the God of violence. God should be the God of love—should be the good God, the God that the gospel is preached so many of them are coming, seeking and asking about the things of Christianity.
- “While the Christians under the persecution, they were very giving, very loving, blessing. Every time they were interviewed after such a massacre, they spoke positively toward the country, toward Muslims, forgiving their persecutors, praying for them, asking forgiveness for them which is unheard of.
- “Every time Muslims were killed, their families, their parents asked for revenge. Here, every time they asked for forgiveness so many people started to compare. What is this? What spirit do you have? This is completely out of the box, out of their expectations. So God is using this in a mighty way to bring glory to Himself and to bring people to reconciliation with Him, with themselves and with their community.
- “More than that, now in Egypt, the government is trying to do their best to pay back what the Christians did to save the country. It could have been a civil war between

the Christians and Muslims, but because the Christians reacted in a loving and forgiving way, (Christians) saved Egypt. The Muslim community came to us and said, Because of you, God saved Egypt. God saved us because of the church. For the first time, the Muslim community is changing their perspective about the church and Christians.

- “Systematically, the radical Muslim, they are doing something to wipe out, if possible, you know, the Christian community, the radical Muslim. But the moderate Muslim actually is good. They are a friend of Christians. But this radical, they are like terrorists, so they keep attacking.

I'll close with an incredible story from Indonesia, where Christians showed love to the Muslims who persecuted them. Outside of Afghanistan, Indonesia, is considered the second largest base of the radical, like al-Qaida, even ISIS. Yet the church is growing at a rate of 2 million converts a year. If you missed my report on this, [click here](#).

Persecution in Indonesia is less in the big cities, where most of the problems where laws are passed to keep churches from renting public buildings. But in some of the outlying islands, there is real persecution. One story of Christian love and forgiveness shows why the church is growing. Again, I'm quoting my source, edited only for space and clarity.

- “So there was a village in the east side of Indonesia. One day radical Muslims used this opportunity to that village. The village is mostly Christian, so they burned their houses, killed them, and they came with 500 soldiers with all the weapons. But then the Christians were cornered into a church building inside, so they killed 211 of them in one day and injured about 140 people. And then, the church, you know, next day they buried the dead and it was so sad. And so they made a monument there. (After this the Christians ministered to

the Muslims) and because of the love of the Christian many were born again. They accepted Christ; there was a revival.

- “(So the Christians) began to pray, ‘Lord, we don’t have any building on Sunday to worship You. Can you give us money to rebuild it?’ So when they prayed, God spoke to them, you know, ‘I don’t want you to use the money to rebuild your church first. I want you to collect the first offering and give it to the Muslims who killed you, who persecuted you. Give it to them so they can renovate their mosque also.’ So they obeyed. Very hard for them, you know, because they were the enemy of them. But anyway, after they prayed, they were convinced by God and then they said, ‘OK, God. We want to obey.’ So they took that first offering, which is huge for them, \$5,000 U.S. dollars. And then, they brought that money with praise and worship. I think about 2,000 people marched to the next village, you know, with joy, came to them and said, ‘God told us to give you this money to rebuild your village and your facilities.’ The Muslim leader wept. They said, ‘Why you love us? We attacked you. We destroyed your building. Why you love us?’
- “The Christians said, ‘Because Jesus told us to do this.’ They all wept and one of them stood up and said, ‘Hey, Muslim people, we need to do something. Go to the jungle and cut all the bamboo tree and donate it to the church.’ So they took all the bamboo trees and brought it to the church and donated it. So the government was so moved because of this, what the Christians did to the Muslims, so the government decided to give \$15,000 U.S. dollars to rebuild the church building and by the help of many churches, you know, the church was able to rebuild and very beautiful, not only the church building but the people now experience tremendous revival. Now they are born again and almost 100 percent of that village become Christian.”