

"Go into all the world and preach the good news..."
(Mark 16:15)

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An update of the various
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Hillview Baptist Church

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"Pray for us..."

The Cry of Persecuted Christians Around the Globe

Today, it is estimated that more than 260 million Christians are personally and directly suffering for their faith in Jesus Christ. The first Sunday in November, this year it's **Sunday, November 1, is the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church**, when Christians in more than 130 countries unite their hearts and stand with their persecuted brothers and sisters in prayer. I would encourage each one of you to take some time today and pray for the millions who are suffering not only persecution, but even martyrdom, simply because they confess Jesus Christ as Lord. And sadly, the persecuted church is increasing daily.

Ever since Stephen became the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:54-60), the church of Jesus Christ has become the object of hatred, derision, persecution, and martyrdom, something Jesus had clearly warned us about. It is impossible to estimate the number of Christians who have suffered and died for their faith during the 2,000-year history of Christianity, but it is in the millions upon millions, upon millions. And while we may think the persecution of Christians during the days of the Roman Empire was severe, and it was, the fact is that the number of Christians being persecuted and martyred in our day is far, far greater than anything that has occurred in the past. Indeed, the number of Christians who have been martyred for the sake of Christ during the last 50 years, is far greater than during all of the previous 1,900+ years.

Please check the world map I have posted on the Missions board, to see in which countries persecution against Christians is taking place in our time. It is absolutely staggering that in over 50 countries there is direct persecution of Christians, with North Korea, Eritrea, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Iran, Syria, and Kazakhstan being among the most dangerous countries for Christians.

One of the ways persecutions against Christians have been fueled in recent years, is by deliberately making false accusations against them, which in turn, makes the Christians the object of increasing attacks and deadly violence. Let me cite a couple of examples I have recently gleaned from various publications.

In the Caucasus region of Russia, an area that is dominated by Islam, being a Christian or being engaged in Christian ministry is extremely dangerous. One day a woman by the name of Anna (not her real name) was roughly taken from her apartment to a police station, where she was mercilessly interrogated. She was accused of attending a "sect" meeting (Christians are considered a sect). Then they started torturing her, using electric shocks. She lost consciousness four times and they struck her in the head repeatedly to bring her back to consciousness. While she was in police custody, the authorities aired a television report falsely accusing Anna and other Christian women of being witches. After this interrogation and public shame, they let Anna go home, but her troubles were far from over. Because of the false television report, neighbours and even relatives turned against her and began accusing her of witchcraft. She fears for her life and is praying that she will never have to go back to "that police prison" again, but she also knows that the police could return for her at any time - night or day.

Here is another example. In early September of 2018, in one of the provinces of India, a report was aired on television, falsely claiming that the Christian pastors in their state were paying Hindus to convert to Christianity. Hindu radicals were incensed by this supposed news and spearheaded persecutions against Christians across the state. Gangs blocked roads to churches and vandalized other ones. Angry mobs dragged pastors from their beds in the middle of the night. Police arrested pastors during Sunday services, closed or burned down other churches, and jailed many of the people. But in spite of such persecutions, the believers are becoming even stronger and many Hindus are turning to the Lord.

Sadly, such stories, and even more painful ones, could be repeated by the thousands from dozens of countries. If your heart is burdened for persecuted Christians around the world, and if you would like to be better informed and updated so you can pray more specifically, may I suggest you request a free one-year trial subscription of the monthly magazine, *The Voice of the Martyrs*. I can give you full details.

Kurt Redschlag
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