

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS

Pastor Joseph Hovsepian

Hebrews 10:32-39, Matthew 24:9-14

The persecution of Christians is not a new phenomenon. Early Christians were persecuted for their faith at the hands of religious leaders and their followers.

In the 20th century, Christians have been persecuted by different groups, like atheistic states such as USSR (communism), North Korea and other regimes.

Today more than ever Christians are systematically persecuted. Christians are the most persecuted people in the world today.

More Christians were martyred in the 20th century than in all other centuries combined. (Christianity.com)

More than 100 thousand Christians are killed for their faith each year. The United Nations Human Rights Council was told in May.

In North Korea somewhere between 50 and 70,000 Christians are being held in detention camps. Persecution watch dog group warns that "Every 5 minutes a Christian is martyred for their faith.

Open Doors, a non-denomination Christian group, listed North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan as the 3 toughest countries for Christians last year.

Christians are persecuted even here in Canada and the U.S.

- Washington School District, Places Football Coach on leave until he stops praying on field.
- Texas teen says teacher told students to deny God or fail.
- A Marine was court-martialled for refusing to remove Bible verse in North Carolina.
- A Canadian student in Nova Scotia was suspended for wearing a yellow t-shirt to school that read "Life is wasted without Jesus" in Nova Scotia.
- The Alberta Human Rights Commission has ordered Rev. Boissin to pay \$7000 to the offended party, to write a public apology for a publication in the "Advocate", and never again to say or write anything critical of homosexuality.

Even though more than 150,000 Christians die every year because of their faith in Christ, around the world, it seems that we, here, either we do not know much about the persecuted Christians or don't care.

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What do our lives look like in comparison with the lives of hundreds of Chinese Pastors and believers living in prison or Christians in Southeast Asia suffering in labour camps because of their faith in Christ?

In many Countries where Christians are persecuted, many of them lose their lives and churches. Here the enemy is more subtle, Christians loose their faith and churches turn to condominiums or other projects.

And the Gospel as preached and presented, has no effect on people's lives because the message has been compromised and watered down.

Instead of being burned down by the enemies of Christ, churches here are torn down by Satan's false prophets and their followers.

G. Campbell Morgan, the great British preacher said: "It is a remarkable thing that the church of Christ persecuted has been the church of Christ **pure**. On the other hand, the church of Christ patronized has been the church of Christ **impure**",

Churches today wanting to become "More culturally relevant" and please their people, compromise and teach and preach a gospel of "cheap, easy believism" leading them to a terrible destruction,

And while millions of Christian are being persecuted and killed and churches destroyed around the world for following Jesus Christ, Churches in the western world are self-destructing,

But, while evil men and imposters are busy deceiving and inventing new and more evil ways to attack and persecute the "**Church**", the Holy Spirit is adding new numbers of people who are willing to follow Christ no matter what the price is, to the invisible, universal Church, The Body of Christ.

The Church, the body of Christ which is made up of true believers is growing 3 times faster than ever before,

The Church is a living organism not an organization!

Romans 12:5 – "So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Also: "For we are members of His Body". (Ephesians 5:30)

And as members of the same body we must be concerned for each other.

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Apostle Paul reminds them and us about the persecuted Christians: *“Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.”* (Hebrews 13:3)

You may ask: “What can we in Canada do for them?” Well, we must remember and pray for them and help them where we can!

And because we are members of the same Body of Christ, their pain and burdens must be our concern too.

The Bible says:

“Carry each other’s burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)