

Facilitator



*We Are Called
to End Persecution*

Guide



CHRISTIANS AGAINST
ALL PERSECUTION

Church & Small Group Engagement Kit

Why? To End Persecution

Motivated by “Love of Neighbor,” we are Christians praying and advocating for all who face persecution because of their religion or belief. While we always should remember the Persecuted Church, we recognize their non-Christian neighbors also face persecution and need help. As a testament to God’s love for all and our commitment to living out the Great Commandment and Commission, we pledge to stand up for anyone facing religious persecution.

Research indicates that almost two out of three people on earth live in countries that restrict the free practice of faith. Christians are regularly targeted because of their faith in Jesus Christ. But others also suffer—Muslims, Hindus, Baha’is, Yazidis, even atheists—because of their beliefs. They too are loved by God, with dignity as his image bearers, and need our help.

Learn more
about Religious
Restrictions
Around the World

[pewresearch.org/
religion/feature/
religious-restrictions-
around-the-world/](https://pewresearch.org/religion/feature/religious-restrictions-around-the-world/)



“Advocating for
anyone facing religious
persecution regardless
of beliefs”



Who?

A Persecuted World

Many of our brothers and sisters in Christ live in a world of persecution. Around the globe, believers are harassed, imprisoned, beaten, and even killed simply because they follow Jesus. From Christians in the Middle East targeted by extremists, to those in Africa driven from their homes, to believers in Asia worshiping in secret under threat of arrest, the body of Christ is hurting. And they are not alone—others, Uyghur Muslims enduring severe persecution or Jews facing rising antisemitism in Europe, Hindus and Sikhs attacked in places of sectarian strife, and countless others whose beliefs fall outside the majority faith or political ideology.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to “remember those in prison as if you were together with them” (Hebrews 13:3), to pray for them, to speak up for them, and to stand alongside all who suffer for righteousness’ sake.

What?

To Gather for Prayer

As a community of Christ followers, the CAAP Network works to:

- **Embrace** the Biblical call to justice and to freedom of religion or belief for all.
- **Learn** about the persecution confronting Christians and other faith communities around the world, and understand the specific contexts in which they suffer.
- **Pray**—both individually and in our churches—for persecuted Christians and non-Christian persecuted groups.
- **Lead** small group discussions, Bible studies, or Sunday morning lessons to dive deeper into the topic of persecution and how we are called to action.
- **Build** a network of unified and like-minded believers who care for anyone who is suffering on account of their background or beliefs.

When?

November 1st or Anytime

Every November 1st, Christians around the world pause to pray for all the persecuted, both the persecuted Church and their persecuted non-Christian neighbors. But God also welcomes our prayers anytime.

Read:
Luke 10:25–37, The Parable of the Good Samaritan
Luke 18:1–8, The Parable of the Persistent Widow



How?

Start with the Biblical Framework

God has given us free will as his image bearers. Because of this and his commands to love our neighbors and to “go and do likewise” like the Good Samaritan did, we as Christians are called to stand against the suffering of any human being, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or religion.

This requires intentional, loving prayer and actions towards communities of different faiths and persecuted Christians. Indeed, God wants that none should perish but that all would come to know him (i.e., through evangelism and discipleship). But it is hard to evangelize about a God of love and peace in contexts of persecution. We must be willing to meet them in their time of physical suffering in order to display a genuine love and compassion that might point them to the Lord.



"Praying for ALL the Persecuted: A New Approach to a Growing Pandemic"
www.youtube.com/@CAAPnetwork1

Duration & Pace Guidelines

This curricula is designed to take a minimum of 1 ½ hours. As the group leader, you may adjust the pace to best suit your group's needs and engagement.

This Can Be Summarized as Follows

Duration & Pace Guidelines

The numbers in the icons indicate the minimum amount of time recommended for group discussions

- ▶ **Every person is made in God's image:**
Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:14, James 3:9
- ▶ **God loves his creation:**
Psalm 36:5-7, Psalm 86:15, Psalm 145:9, Job 12:10, John 3:16, 1 John 3:1, 1 John 4:9-10, Ephesians 3:18-19
- ▶ **Every person has freedom of conscience:**
2 Peter 3:9, Mark 9:23-24, Romans 14:2-3
- ▶ **God has a heart for justice:**
Micah 6:8, Psalm 10:17-18, Psalm 82:3-4, Proverbs 24:11, Matthew 25:31-46, Hebrews 13:3
- ▶ **Jesus taught his followers to love their neighbors and commanded them to "go and do likewise" in helping others:**
Luke 10:25-37, Deuteronomy 15:7-8, Galatians 6:10, Philippians 2:3-4
- ▶ **The Bible teaches about engaging a pluralistic world:**
Matthew 13:30, Acts 20:35, Romans 12:19-20, Acts 17:21-23
- ▶ **Helping non-Christians helps the Church long-term, especially in minority contexts:**
Matthew 5:16, Proverbs 3:27, Proverbs 21:13, Matthew 5:38-42, Luke 6:30

Watch Video



"Why Should Christians Advocate for All?"
www.youtube.com/@CAAPnetwork1

Group Questions

1. What theologically motivated arguments (good or bad) have you heard regarding the Church advocating for the rights of other faith groups to freely practice their faith?
2. How can we use these as starting points to dive deeper into this topic?
3. How does Scripture shape our understanding of justice and religious freedom for all people, not just Christians?
4. What examples from church history—positive or negative—can help guide our approach to defending the rights of all faith communities today?

Watch Videos



"Freedom of Religion or Belief is for EVERYONE"
www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-Wmpqo1eQQ



"Introduction to Freedom of Religion or Belief"
www.forb-learning.org/video/1-an-introduction-to-freedom-of-religion-or-belief/



A God Given Right: Religious Freedom

What it is:

- ▶ The freedom to have, choose, and change a religion or belief.
- ▶ The freedom to practice a religion or belief.
- ▶ Freedom from coercion.
- ▶ Freedom from discrimination.
- ▶ Rights of parents and guardians to raise their child in accordance with their own religion and the rights of the child to continue in this religion as he/she ages.
- ▶ The right to conscientious objection. The protection from being forced to act against their conscience and core of their beliefs.

What it is not:

- ▶ Religious freedom is not something that protects religions themselves, nor specific gods or sacred texts, etc. Stated differently, religious freedom does not protect ideas or doctrines. Rather, it protects human beings, i.e., the person holding the religious belief or worldview.
- ▶ It also does not dictate what a people, community, or country should believe. The freedom to change or leave a faith is a key aspect of this right.

Questions to Consider

1. Have you thought about religious freedom as a human right? What are human rights?
2. How does the above coincide with your understanding of the First Amendment?
3. What international laws protect 'freedom of religion or belief' (FoRB)?
4. Do you think it's important for Christians to have a general understanding of these legal protections and rights?
5. Where do you see God's love for freedom of conscience in the Bible?



Understanding Persecution

What is persecution? Persecution is violence and physical suffering, such as torture, beatings, jailing, rape, death, and destruction of places of worship or communities. It is one of the most personal human rights violations because it attacks the core of one's being. With persecution, there is also an inadequate (or zero) access to remedy the situation and/or government's complete lack of recourse. Of course, persecution is often a response to nontraditional or unpopular beliefs (clash of values) or occurs when a government or majority religious group feels threatened. Other times, it occurs because of spiritual opposition.

Persecution can take many forms, under governments that are:

1. **Authoritarian** (e.g., China, where the Chinese Communist Party uses severe surveillance to deter religious practice of any form.)
2. **Democratic** (e.g., India, where the prime minister, who is a Hindu Nationalist, was elected democratically.)
3. **Extremist** (e.g., Pakistan, where radical religious leaders maintain control over society.)
4. **Terrorist** (e.g., Iraq, where ISIS targets Christians, Yazidis, or fellow Muslims who do not follow their worldview; or Nigeria, where Boko Haram continues to kidnap young Christian girls and force marriages or conversions to Islam.)

When thinking about persecution, we need to understand its true meaning.

It is *Biblical kind of persecution* we see Paul talk about.

"I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches." (2 Corinthians 11:23–28).

► See page 10 for a full list of scripture.

We know Christians are violently persecuted, and we need to pray for them. They need help as a global pandemic of persecution confronts believers daily with violence because of their faith.

But persecuted Christians are rarely alone – oppressors also target persons of different faiths and no faith. Communist China commits genocide against Uyghur Muslims while crushing Tibetan Buddhism, all while they bulldoze churches in other regions. In India, Muslims must fear lynching while churches are shuttered. Iran's ruthless persecution of the Baha'i faith knows no limits, while they also jail evangelical pastors.

Indeed, sometimes it is others who suffer more. Because of this, we must remember that Christians are part of a community of suffering.



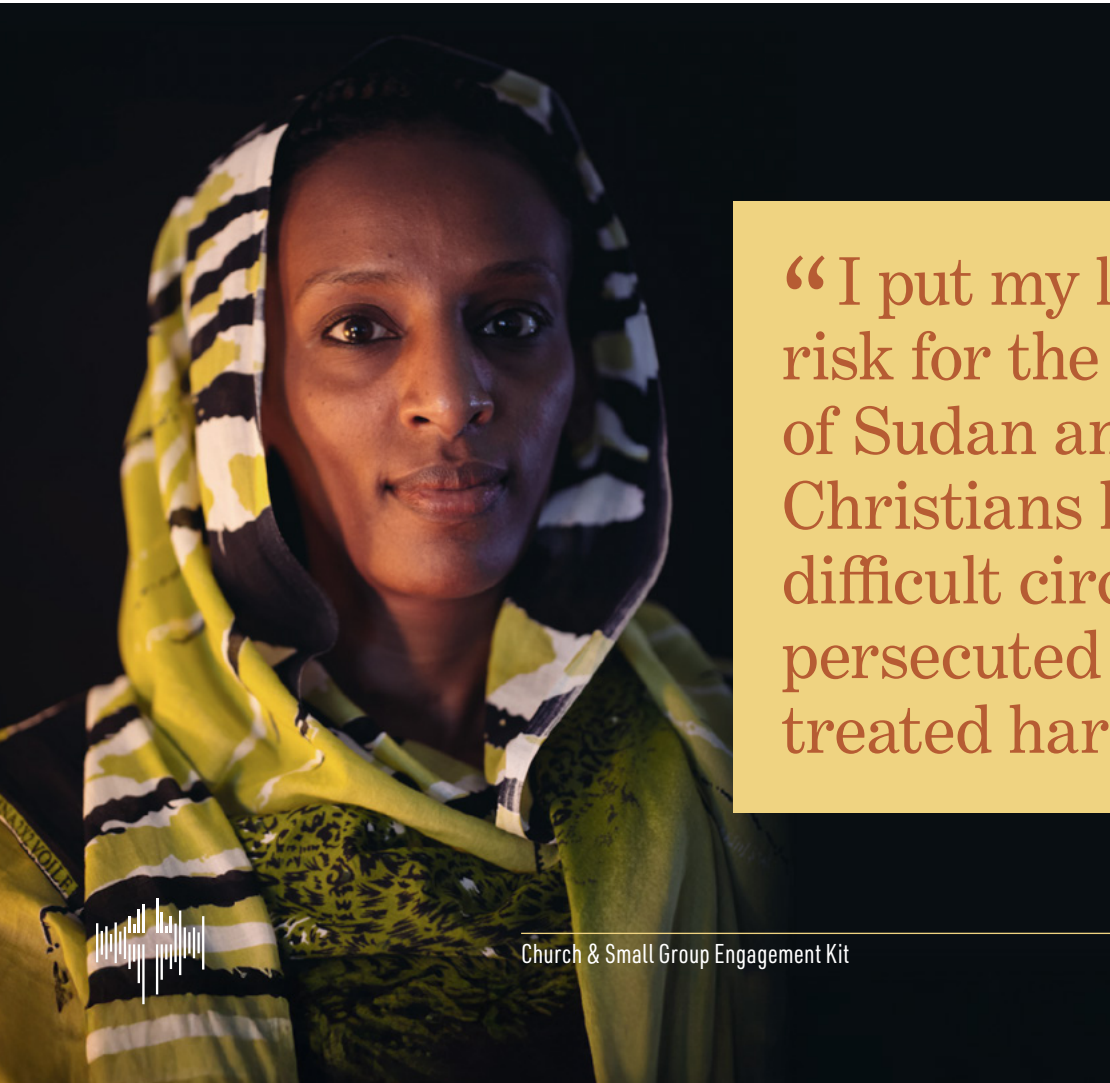
Mariam Ibraheem's Story

Mariam Ibraheem was born in a Sudanese refugee camp to a Muslim father and Christian mother. After her father's death, she was raised as a Christian by her mother. Despite a difficult childhood, Mariam built a successful career, married a Christian, and became the proud mother of a baby boy.

 Watch Video



"Mariam Ibraheem, religious persecution survivor - Full Interview"
www.youtube.com/@CAAPnetwork1



“I put my life at risk for the women of Sudan and for Christians living under difficult circumstances, persecuted and treated harshly.”

Mariam Ibraheem's Story

continued

But in 2013, everything changed when police arrested her, accusing her of adultery (for marrying a non-Muslim man) and apostasy (for converting to Christianity).

Authorities demanded she renounce her marriage, give up her child, and convert to Islam. Mariam stood firm in her faith. As a result, a Sharia court sentenced her to 100 lashes—and by death by hanging.

Mariam was shackled during most of her imprisonment, including while giving birth in prison in May 2014. Her son (then about 20 months old) was also confined with her in horrible prison conditions. But even during this confinement, Mariam felt peace from the Lord and chose to share about the Gospel and her hope in Christ with other prisoners, often at risk to her own safety.

Her story reached the ears of the international advocacy community, and a global call for her release ensued. In June of 2014, her sentence was overturned, and she was released. Today, Mariam lives in the United States, becoming an advocate for religious freedom and a symbol of the injustices often faced by Christian or minority faith women.

As outlined in her book *Shackled*, Mariam's unwavering faith in the midst of darkness sparked hope among advocates and inspired many to speak up for religious minorities around the world.

*Today:
Mariam and her
family are living
in freedom*



Develop an Overview of Christian Persecution

What does the Bible say?

In Philippians 3:10, Paul declared, *"I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death..."*

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:10).

Also Read:

- 1 Peter 4:12-19
- 1 Peter 1:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4

Questions to Consider

“Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.”

Acts 14:19

1. How can we fully understand persecution while living in a country where we enjoy freedom to worship and belief?
2. What are steps to deepen this understanding without becoming overwhelmed?
3. **In the OT – Elijah**
 - ▶ Directly challenged Baal (considered a god) by defending his faith in God (Yahweh)
 - 1 Kings 16-17
 - ▶ Queen Jezebel's continued hostility towards Elijah and prophets of Yahweh forced Elijah to become a fugitive and go into hiding.
 - 1 Kings 18:4
 - ▶ Threatened again by Queen Jezebel and the people of Israel who now vowed to kill him (after Mount Carmel), forcing him to flee and hide in a cave.
 - 1 Kings 19:1-14
 - ▶ Or, in addition to Elijah, consider Daniel's refusal to worship the king's image.
 - Daniel 6:8-23
4. **In the NT – Paul**
 - ▶ Stoned in Lystra and dragged out of city until the crowd thought he was dead.
 - Acts 14:19
 - ▶ Flogged and beaten
 - 2 Corinthians 11:24 – received 39 lashes
 - ▶ Acts 16:20-24 (Paul and Silas accused in Philippi, attacked with iron rods, and imprisoned) Interrogated and flogged.
 - Acts 22:24
 - ▶ Imprisoned for over five years for preaching the gospel
 - Acts 24-28
 - ▶ Beheaded in Rome (according to tradition)



 **Watch
Video**



"What Defines Religious Persecution".
www.youtube.com/@CAAPnetwork1

 **Supplemental
Guide**

Review "Bible Study Outline" (find on the CAAP website under Church and Small Group Engagement Kit)
Discuss questions posed there in small groups of five.

 **Prayer
Pause**

Take five to ten minutes to pray individually or with others for persecuted Christians around the world.
Ask God to provide protection and rescue for those in harm's way.

 **Group
Discussion**

What actions can you take in your community?
► For further discussion, review CAAP's "Bible Study Outline."



We pray and
advocate for all
who face persecution
because of their
religion or belief.



Develop a General Overview of Non-Christian Faith Communities

Who are other faith communities (religious and ethnoreligious groups) suffering around the world alongside Christians?

- ▶ Muslims
- ▶ Baha'is
- ▶ Yazidis
- ▶ Buddhists
- ▶ Jews
- ▶ Hindus
- ▶ Jehovah's Witnesses
- ▶ Sikh
- ▶ Humanists/Atheists

Group Questions

1. In what ways is the persecution of other religious groups similar to, or different from, the persecution of Christians around the world?
2. Does endorsing the human dignity of persecuted individuals require endorsing their different beliefs? Why or why not?
3. How can we support and pray for individuals in a way that honors the persecution for their beliefs without ourselves sharing their faith?
4. After reading the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), how does Jesus challenge us to look beyond differences of faith and ethnicity to show compassion to others?
5. In what ways can Christians promoting religious freedom for others be part of God's work in the world?

Group Activity

Choose one of the religious groups above and review the following:

- ▶ Country
- ▶ Context:
 - Are they being persecuted by government officials or non-state actors? (e.g., terrorist groups—In Nigeria, for example, Boko Haram is a terrorist group of Muslim extremists who seek to overthrow the current government and establish Islamic law. Thus, they heavily persecute Christians, especially across Northern Nigeria, but they also persecute other Muslims who do not align with their radical Islamic worldview.)
- ▶ Is it clear why they are targeted?

What, if anything, is currently being done to support these groups both internationally and/or by Christian organizations? Are there ways your community can get involved?

Prayer Pause

Take a five to ten minutes to pray individually or in groups for one of the persecuted groups above, asking God to provide protection and rescue for those victimized for their beliefs. Additionally, take time to pray for guidance on how your own church can take meaningful steps to engage with one or more of these faith groups in your community.

Community Action

What actions can you take in your community?



Jewher Ilham's Story

In February 2013, Jewher Ilham was just a teenager when she last saw her father, Ilham Tohti, at the Beijing Capital International Airport. They were on their way to Indiana University, where Ilham—an economics professor and prominent Uyghur intellectual—had been invited to take up a visiting scholar position. But as they approached the departure gate, Chinese authorities stopped Ilham and detained him, allowing only Jewher to continue on to the United States. That moment would mark the beginning of her life in exile and the start of a tireless campaign to bring international attention to the fate of her father and the broader repression faced by Uyghur Muslims.



Watch Jewher Ilham's story now.
www.youtube.com/@CAAPnetwork1



“If you keep your silence, there’s no change.”



Jewher Ilham's Story *continued*

Ilham Tohti was known for his peaceful advocacy for Uyghur rights and his efforts to foster dialogue between Han Chinese and Uyghurs. But Chinese authorities viewed his work as a threat. In 2014, he was sentenced to life in prison on charges of “separatism.”

The plight of Ilham Tohti is emblematic of a broader campaign of repression that has targeted millions of Uyghurs in western China. Since 2017, credible reports reveal that over a million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims have been arbitrarily detained in so-called “reeducation camps,” subjected to forced labor, indoctrination, family separation, and surveillance. Religious expression has been criminalized, mosques demolished, and Uyghur language and culture systematically eroded. Numerous governments and institutions have labeled the Chinese government’s actions as crimes against humanity or even genocide.

Today, Jewher Ilham stands as a leading voice for Uyghur human rights, including religious freedom for all. Through her writing, public speaking, and advocacy at institutions like the U.S. Congress and the United Nations, she has shared her father’s story and amplified the voices of those who remain silenced. She is part of a growing diaspora movement to hold the Chinese government accountable. Though separated by prison walls and thousands of miles, Jewher has made her father’s cause her own, ensuring that neither his name nor the struggle of the Uyghur people is forgotten. As Christians, we should pray and advocate for persecuted Uyghurs like Ilham Tohti.



“Innocent people like my father Ilham Tohti need to be freed. Just like my father never stopped advocating for the voiceless, I will not stop — no matter what.”



Advocacy

How can your own church get involved in international religious freedom advocacy? Hear from international religious freedom experts through the articles, guidelines, and video resources noted below:



Prayer & Other Faith-Based Resources:

- ▶ **CAAP Network:**
 - [Monthly Prayer Guides](#) (EN/SP)
 - [Prisoner of Conscience Profiles](#)
 - [4-day Bible Study](#) (EN/SP)
- ▶ **CSW:**
 - [Small Group Study Guides](#)
 - [Prayer Resources](#)
- ▶ **Voice of the Martyrs:**
 - [Join a prayer calendar or become a church representative](#)

Find more CAAP content

- ▶ [Power of Prayer](#)
- ▶ [Advocacy Tools](#)
- ▶ [Newsletters](#)
- What resources can your own church create to distribute in your communities?
- How can you get your youth involved?

Advocacy Resources

1. [Open Doors](#) (includes invaluable country profiles)
2. [Stefanus Alliance](#) (includes booklets and digital learning materials)
3. [CSW Campaign Resources](#)
4. [USCIRF](#)
5. [Institute for Global Engagement](#)
6. [FORB Learning Platform](#)

Find information on writing advocacy letters for victims of religious persecution, [here](#). This website includes:

- ▶ How to write your letter
- ▶ Where to address your letter

Review & Evaluate:

- ▶ [Writing Guidelines](#)

Encourage Christian prisoners of conscience by sending letters via:

- ▶ [ICC](#)
- ▶ [Connect and Encourage \(CSW\)](#)
- ▶ [Write to Your Local Legislator](#)

Prayer Guides



Prayer Guides

www.caapnetwork.org/prayer-guides



Bible Study

www.caapnetwork.org/bible-study

Throughout the New Testament, we see Christ's call for a heroic love of neighbor. This heroic love is rooted in action and prayer. Christians should pray for any and all who face persecution because of religion or belief. To do this well, we must first understand who our neighbors are, where they come from, and the context in which they are suffering.

We have created prayer guides to help. These guides focus on some of the most persecuted countries in the world. Our hope is that they will not only help guide your prayers but also facilitate discussions among your friends, families, and small groups.

1 Cuba

Cuba's government continues to use surveillance, harassment, and arbitrary detentions against people of all faiths, even forcing many religious leaders into exile. With tight regulations on all religious activities, Cubans across the island are unable to worship without fear.

2 Eritrea

In a turbulent corner of Africa sits one of the poorest and most repressive countries in the world—Eritrea. With an authoritarian government in control since the early 1990s, Eritreans of various faith backgrounds face restrictions, abuse, and imprisonment for what they believe.

3 Iraq

Ten years since ISIS swept through northern Iraq seeking to exterminate Yazidis, Christians, and even Shia Muslims who disagreed with their ideology, Iraqis of various faiths still face extreme persecution through the use of anti-conversion laws, mass displacements due to violence, and the criminalization—to the point of death—of certain religious practices.

4 Pakistan

Though a place of incredible diversity and beauty, Pakistan contains rampant human rights violations impacting people of all faiths. With government repression and terrorist attacks victimizing religious minorities and Muslims alike, it remains a country full of fear and suffering.

5 India

Alarming levels of religious harassment and persecution are occurring across India through discriminatory laws, hateful rhetoric against non-Hindus, and organized attacks generated online. And under its current leadership, communal violence targeting minority faith groups is increasingly widespread.

6 China

With over a billion people and the atheistic Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in power, many people of faith, including Tibetan Buddhists, Uyghur Muslims, and Chinese Christians—are unable to practice their faith freely.

7 Vietnam

Though it made significant progress in the area of religious freedom from 2000–2019, Vietnam's authoritarian governance and state control over social activities show worrying signs of regression and an increase in documented violations and abuse against people of various faith backgrounds, especially in rural areas.



Prayer Pause

Take five to ten minutes to pray individually or with others for one of these countries, including Christians and their non-Christian neighbors, facing persecution, asking for God to intervene with protection and rescue. Additionally, take time to pray for guidance on how your own church can take meaningful steps to engage with one or more of these religious groups present in your own community, or from afar.



Theological Questions to Consider



1. Does tolerance of and respect for the right of other religions to practice their faith without violence strengthen your own faith? In what ways, and why is that important as a follower of Christ?
2. In the OT, God appeared intolerant of any other belief systems that weren't honoring His name, mainly, idolatry. How then do we as believers reconcile God's "intolerance" within the First Commandment with the mandate to love one another found in the Second Commandment? How did Christ's eventual death and resurrection also influence this understanding?
3. In what ways has your own work experiences shown you that helping non-Christians ultimately helps the Church long-term, especially in minority contexts?
4. In talking about the use of his freedom, Paul professes, "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). How can we move into that way of thinking in order to care about the persecuted of other faiths? Is there a tension between genuinely praying for the persecuted of all faiths while also ultimately seeking their salvation through Christ? How do believers walk faithfully in this?
5. Regarding prayer for the persecuted of all faiths, is there a point where a Christian must go beyond tolerance and move into evangelism? Either way, how might this affect our prayer life towards minority faiths now who face violence around the world? Stated differently, is religious tolerance a foundational requirement for a person to eventually move into the evangelistic mode at all? If it is, why does faithful prayer towards these groups strengthen this trajectory?
6. John 14:6 holds Jesus' clearest declaration of salvation: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Yet Jesus also adamantly teaches us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. (Matt. 5:43-48). How does this inform a believer's posture, understanding, and ultimate action of committing to pray for the persecuted of all faiths?
7. In Luke 16:1-15, Jesus tells the parable of the shrewd manager, which, beyond its reading with respect to money, praised how shrewd some non-Christians were (and that sometimes we should be like them in dealing with people and other things). Jesus commended the zeal and vigor of the "children of the world," later noting, "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much." In what ways can we read this parable together with the Biblical mandate to love our neighbor and, as an extension of that, to pray for the persecuted of all faiths?
8. Why would a political system choose to be intolerant to different faiths? In your assessment of these governments, have any prevailed or prospered? How does religious intolerance and persecution affect a society as whole? With that, why should Christians care about a government and its people from another part of the world, especially where Christians might be the minority? Is it true that if a country is tolerant of all religious worship, it will ultimately be a place where it is easier to evangelize? However, is that a proper/genuine reason to care/pray for other faiths?

What is
Christians Against
All Persecution,
the CAAP Network?

In the face of far-reaching religious persecution impacting Christians and members of other faiths, we are a network of Christians working to defend all who face persecution, regardless of beliefs. We are Christian advocates and pastors, lawyers and laity, Christians of all denominations and backgrounds. Our logo evokes the idea of Christ protecting the innocent, but also Christians raising their voices against oppression.

Connect with us at CAAPnetwork@gmail.com to see how you can join us in the fight against persecution worldwide.



**CHRISTIANS AGAINST
ALL PERSECUTION**

ADVOCATING FOR ANYONE FACING RELIGIOUS
PERSECUTION REGARDLESS OF BELIEFS



Join Us—November 1

“Pray for ALL the Persecuted Day”

Here's what you can do: speak with your pastor or missions director; share the facilitation guide and website information; share briefly in church or have a small group discussion; host a prayer gathering in your own community; share CAAP Network prayer resources.