

# persecution

per'se-cu'tion *n.* Pursuing or pressing on, to oppress, harrass and also to bring a judgment or punishment.

Christians are the largest people group in the world who are persecuted for their faith.

## what is it?

### *Reasons for persecution*

**Theological** Church history is full of examples of the persecution of Christians from within the church due to their alleged "heresies".

**Political** Repeatedly Christians were made the scapegoats amidst someone's political agenda. During the reign of Nero, for example, Christians were blamed for the great fire that destroyed much of Rome. As a result, Christians were brutally persecuted. Today in countries like Vietnam, Christians are often accused of subversive activities and persecuted accordingly.

**Economic** In some regions Christians are blamed for failing crops or a failing economy on account of their refusal to appease the gods with sacrifices.

**Social** Again, using Vietnam as an example, Christians are accused of breaking with the traditions of their ancestors (such as drinking wine and smoking). Furthermore, in many countries the social and religious life is closely intertwined. Thus the refusal to participate in a religious ceremony also means that Christians are unable to attend with the family and are socially cut-off from the rest of the family.

**For the sake of righteousness** For being like Christ, for displaying Christ-likeness in every area of life. Christians, by their readiness to suffer for what they believe, establish the value of their faith in being a follower of Christ.

### **Persecution is continually on the increase throughout the world.**

*Hebrews 11 provides us with a list of different types of persecution that believers faced in the past. The persecution continues to this day and is also increasing:*

- Detention
- Torture
- Beatings
- Forced marriage
- Rape
- Imprisonment
- Enslavement
- Mass resettlement
- Death
- Confiscation of property
- Denial of the right to assemble
- Prohibitions against publishing, distributing or possessing religious literature and materials, etc.

## How will you respond?

[www.christianresponse.org](http://www.christianresponse.org)



INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN  
**response**

TELEPHONE 604 504 4176

FACSIMILE 604 864 9160

TOLL-FREE 1 866 896 5599

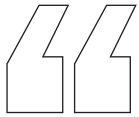
CANADA (Head Office)

34629A Delair Road

Abbotsford, BC V2S 2E1

# pray at all times...

*Many of those who are suffering persecution tell us that their most urgent need is prayer. Their prayer is not for relief from suffering but for the strength and ability to endure suffering for the sake of Christ.*



*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*

— EPHESIANS 6:18-20



- 1 Pray for God to strengthen the accused and their families and for justice to prevail.
- 2 Pray for the ongoing safety of the leaders and pastors who risk and suffer persecution to fulfill their calling.
- 3 Pray for Christians to continue to practice their faith without compromise in spite of the dangers.
- 4 Pray for God to give Christian pastors and their families a real sense of His love and providence.
- 5 Pray that government policies will be confronted by democratic countries that value human rights.
- 6 Pray that truth would prevail and that God would strengthen those who face trial for their faith.
- 7 Pray that God would bring healing to the victims of violence and to their families.
- 8 Pray that God would grant Christian families peace in their ordeals and wisdom to know how best to proceed.
- 9 Pray that God would continue to strengthen the church in the midst of difficult circumstances.
- 10 Pray that the kingdom of God would come and that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

How will you respond?

[www.christianresponse.org](http://www.christianresponse.org)



INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN  
**response**

TELEPHONE 604 504 4176

FACSIMILE 604 864 9160

TOLL-FREE 1 866 896 5599

CANADA (Head Office)

34629A Delair Road

Abbotsford, BC V2S 2E1