



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

the
DNA
of a
PERSECUTED
CHRISTIAN

OUR INHERITED STRANDS
OF IDENTITY FROM CHRIST

BOLDNESS IN CHRIST

"Through [Jesus] we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." Romans 5:2-4

**SMALL GROUP
INSPIRATIONAL GUIDE**

ISSUE SIX



BOLDNESS IN CHRIST

In this final issue of the six part series, **'The DNA of a Persecuted Christian'**, we look at the strands of identity, which we have inherited from Jesus, that enable our persecuted brothers and sisters to live for Him in spite of hardship and suffering. As you heard some of their stories during this series, we hope that you learned more about the persecuted Church and will continue to pray with us for them. We trust that the series not only broadened your insight into the lives of our persecuted family, but also showed you more clearly the inheritance, or DNA, that the body of Christ, whether free or persecuted, shares. (For more on this series see p. 4.)

EXAMINING OUR FAITH

As followers of Jesus, we have the words of eternal life. Why are we often reluctant to share them? God's word teaches us to be bold in sharing the Good News.

2 Corinthians 3:12 says, *"Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold."* Paul had hope and confidence in the total and complete forgiveness of sin for those who believe in the Gospel. And because of this he was able to preach the Gospel boldly and without fear or hesitation.

For us, the thought of sharing the Gospel with those around us can be daunting. But what is it that compels persecuted Christians, even in some of the most hostile environments, to boldly share the hope that they have in Christ?

Persecuted Christians have counted the cost and have chosen to live out the Great Commission every day, deny themselves and take up their crosses to follow Jesus. They count themselves blessed to be found worthy to suffer for the cause of Christ and are, therefore, willing to risk sharing the Gospel with those around them, so they may also have a chance to share in the hope that we have in Christ Jesus.

READ Acts 4:23-31

Why do you think Peter and John asked for boldness even though they had just seen a great miracle performed?

Do you feel like you are bold in your faith? What hinders you from sharing the Gospel?

READ Pastor Lam's Story on p. 3

What does the boldness of Pastor Lam and his wife say about their faith and the Gospel?

Where in your Christian walk do you need greater boldness? After you've considered it, perhaps pray Peter and John's prayer.





PASTOR LAM'S STORY

Pastor Lam was a faithful servant of God in Vietnam. After their wedding, he and his wife went off to their honeymoon. But on the way, the police caught up with them and arrested the newlyweds for their involvement in the illegal house church movement.

They were separated and imprisoned. But Pastor Lam didn't allow their situation to dampen his spirit. He prayed to the Lord and asked not "why", but "what" it was that God wanted them to do in the prison.

After praying, he looked intently at the other prisoners. In the eyes of the world these people deserved only punishment, but in the eyes of God they were people for whom Christ died.

Pastor Lam knew then what God wanted him to do – bring these prisoners to the Lord. They were his captive audience. He realised he could speak to them all day long and they had nowhere to go! So he preached to them non-stop until many of them accepted Christ. Little did he know that his wife in the other cell was also busy evangelising.

The prison officials became concerned that so many prisoners were turning to Christ, so they decided to set Pastor Lam and his wife free. Pastor Lam and his wife were excited at the pronouncement, but the excitement was mingled with sadness, realising that they'll be leaving behind new believers in need of discipling. They asked the prison officials if they could stay in prison for a few more days (so that they could disciple the new believers) but their request was denied.

Pastor Lam and his wife continued to serve God in Vietnam after their release.

PRAYER

Pray for God to open your eyes to opportunities where you can be a shining light for Him. Pray that He will equip you to boldly proclaim His name in all circumstances. As well as for boldness to share the stories of the persecuted Church.

Pray that through the boldness of our persecuted brothers and sisters, their persecutors will start to question their own beliefs and will start searching for answers and find God. Pray that through their boldness, God will continue to advance His Kingdom where faith costs the most.

Pray that as this series comes to an end, God will help you to not lose sight of what you have read and learned. May you, like our persecuted brothers and sisters, live a life wholly surrendered to God.





WHAT THIS SERIES IS ALL ABOUT

So what is the **'The DNA of a persecuted Christian'** series all about? As Christians, one of our core beliefs is that we are all part of one body, the Church, and we are all united under Jesus, the head of the body.

As 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 says, *"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many."*

We all share the same DNA then – adopted children of God who were once dead in our sins, but now are alive in Christ. And because we are all part of the body of Christ, we believe that the persecuted Church is also part of the **DNA** of every Christian.

As Christians living in 'safer' places in the world, we have a lot to learn from the persecuted Church. Though we live in places where we aren't violently persecuted for our faith, we too face situations in life where we feel afraid, sometimes because of our faith. For many persecuted Christians, danger is never far away and they often fear the consequences of their faith being exposed. But God gives them and us comfort in our fears and teaches us not to be afraid. Persecuted Christians know all too well what it is to face their fears head on with endurance, humility, and boldness.

This is why prayer is so important and it's something that the persecuted Church partakes in daily. As you read about the different characteristics that make up the DNA of persecuted Christians, and, really, the DNA of all Christians, pray for their situation, pray for their safety, and pray for those who persecute them.

Through their stories we can learn to love our enemies, pray for those who persecute us, and endure through hard times: these are all things that persecuted Christians often experience in a very different way to us. And as you go through this series, we hope and pray that you will gain a deeper insight, not just into the DNA of persecuted Christians, but the whole body of Christ's DNA. We are, after all, ONE body.



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