

FACES OF PERSECUTION



1. Member of a secret North Korean house church

In places in Asia, like North Korea, anyone found not to follow the main religion, or in the case of North Korea follow Kim Jong Un, means imprisonment, torture or death. In Asia, political and religious nationalism is on the rise and anything that is contrary to the main political or religious views, such as Christianity, is frowned upon.

"We have only one Bible shared with 12 other families, and each family must take turns to borrow it. We hide the Bible in a secret place. Once a month, three families get together and worship together; once a year all believers get together in a mountain valley to worship and have secret fellowship. We always remember all the prayer support from all over the world. It encourages us to live another victorious day in Christ Jesus."

Even owning a Bible in North Korea is illegal, so gathering as a church is an offence that authorities punish severely... Up to 70 000 Christians are serving long sentences in horrific prison and labour camps.

PRAY FOR: Christians in North Korea. Ask for peace and protection as they follow Jesus in secret.

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2. A victim of violence in sub-Saharan Africa

A surge in violence is afflicting Christians across sub-Saharan Africa. The Church faces murder, kidnapping, rape and the destruction of churches, businesses and homes from Islamic terrorists, governments and religious fanatics just because of their faith in Jesus.

"I praise God that some survived, many in truly miraculous ways. However, we are deeply traumatised, broken, and in need of much prayer. Please pray for us. Pray for the surviving students to heal not just in body, but in mind too. Many saw sights too horrible to describe and those memories can harm if not attended to. I pray that they each get adequate psychological help." – Fred Gitonga, Chairman of Garissa University Christian Union, in Kenya, who survived an attack by Islamic militant group Al-Shabaab on the university campus. 148 people were killed, many were Christians.

PRAY FOR: Those who have experienced violence and trauma because of their faith. Ask specifically for comfort and healing.

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3. Christians in the Middle East returning home

In the Middle East, Christians face persecution due to Islamic oppression. They're targeted by extremists for their faith and face being disowned or even killed by their Muslim families to restore the families honour.

Christian children and their families have started to return to their homes in the liberated village of Karamles, Iraq. Among the first to return were 12-year-old Noah and his sister, Salina (7).

Noah's house was completely destroyed by Islamic State (IS) militants, so the family is staying at his aunt's house. "After the liberation in October, we found out that IS had burned our house. I was very sad when I saw it for the first time," says Noah. Despite everything, the family is pleased to be back home after being forced to live in a refugee camp in Erbil for three years. "It's like living in heaven," said Almas, Noah's mother. "It's so good to be back on our own soil, in the place where we were born, where our parents and grandparents lived. We're so happy to be back living in Karamles."

PRAY FOR: Families who are returning to their homes across Iraq, and those who are planning to return soon.