



Stand with the Persecuted April 17, 2016

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Scripture calls on us to remember our brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted for their faith: "Let brotherly love continue... Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body." (Heb. 13:1,3 ESV). Paul reinforces this: "...there are many parts, yet one body.... If one member suffers, all suffer together" (1 Cor. 12:20, 26a ESV). American believers must stand in solidarity with fellow members of the body of Christ internationally who are suffering. Many are being singled out for acts of violence, torture, and even martyrdom simply because they follow Jesus.

We have witnessed the violent advance of ISIS, especially in Iraq and Syria, displacing and persecuting Christians who would not convert to Islam, marking their homes with the Arabic letter "N" for Nazarene. A year ago, we saw horrific images from another



video from ISIS terrorists that showed them shooting and beheading some 30 Ethiopian Christians on a beach in Libya. These images, now seared into our collective memory, are a heart-wrenching reminder of the costs paid by our brothers and sisters for following Jesus.



Open Doors USA reports that at least 100 million Christians are being persecuted for their faith worldwide and that each month:

322 CHRISTIANS ARE
KILLED FOR THEIR FAITH



214 CHURCHES AND
CHRISTIAN **PROPERTIES**
ARE DESTROYED



772 FORMS OF **VIOLENCE**
ARE COMMITTED AGAINST
CHRISTIANS (SUCH AS BEATINGS, ABDUCTIONS,
RAPES, ARRESTS AND FORCED MARRIAGES)



Courtesy of Open Doors USA

As fellow members of the body of Christ, we have an obligation to our spiritual family, our brothers and sisters who are suffering.



Family Research Council

801 G St, NW | Washington, DC 20001 | 800.225.4008



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For more, Text STAND to 313131 Action Steps

1. Pray for the Persecuted. Lift up your brothers and sisters in Christ as they endure unbearable persecution.

Pray for Lisa (not her real name) and her co-laborers as they face hardship sharing the Gospel in the midst of the war in Syria. But praise the Lord, an imam has come to Jesus through their ministry! We need to continue to pray for these believers to be a strong witness so other Muslims turn to Jesus.

Paul asked the believers to “Remember my chains” (Col. 4:18). However, do not just pray generically for the persecuted church, pray specifically. Visit the websites of ministries which are pleading the cause of the persecuted and which post stories of men, women, boys and girls who are suffering for Jesus. Read the words and listen to the testimony of the suffering and pray for

them, by name. Prayer is a vital way to encourage our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world.

Pray also for their persecutors as Jesus commanded (Matt. 5:44), that they realize that it is *Jesus* they are persecuting (Acts 9:4-5), and repent and come to know the grace, forgiveness, and love we know.

2. Participate in Practical Ministry to the Persecuted. Praying is good, but we must also act to meet real needs. There are a number of ministries which offer hands-on relief to refugees, victims of violence, and the families of martyrs, such as Samaritan’s Purse, Voice of the Martyrs, Open Doors USA, and others. Donate to these and other ministries. Volunteer your time to serve. Be the hands and heart of Christ to our brothers and sisters.

3. Promote Public Policy that Protects the Persecuted.

After the horror of the Holocaust, the international community established protections for religious freedom, first in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and later in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This right is consistent with the religious freedom rights articulated by our First Amendment, rights that we want to see upheld so that our brothers and sisters around the world are protected from persecution. As Christians, we also want to see this right protected for all, regardless of faith, for this freedom in civil society is motivated by our desire as Christians to “do good” to fellow man. While we applaud the State Department’s “genocide” designation on the persecution of Christians by ISIS, more can be done to protect their human rights.

“[E]veryone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.” ICCPR



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