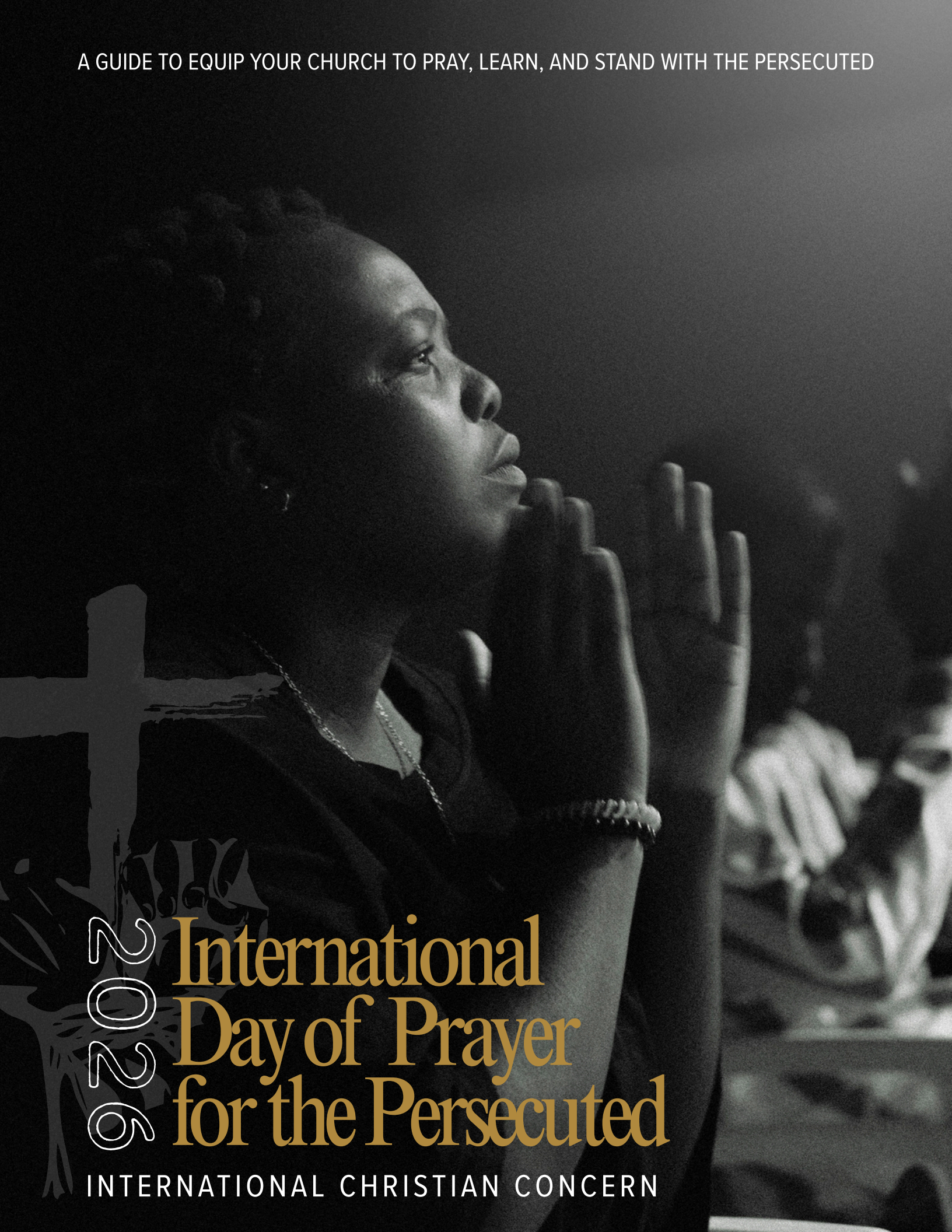
A GUIDE TO EQUIP YOUR CHURCH TO PRAY, LEARN, AND STAND WITH THE PERSECUTED



2026

International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN



SAVE THE DATE

IDOP VIRTUAL PRAYER CALL

FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS

NOVEMBER 2 AT 12 P.M. ET

Gather with believers around the world for a special IDOP Prayer Event.

On Monday, November 2, join International Christian Concern for a dedicated time of prayer for persecuted Christians around the world. Together, we'll hear stories from the persecuted church, learn how to pray for believers facing pressure and violence, and lift up our brothers and sisters before the Lord.

Join ICC staff and supporters for a special International Day of Prayer event as we unite in prayer for persecuted believers around the world.

SAVE THE DATE AND REGISTER

November 2, 2026 **at 12 p.m. ET**
Virtual Microsoft Teams Event

Scan the QR Code to sign up or click here.

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

—HEBREWS 12:2

PREPARE FOR IDOP 2026

WHEN ONE PART SUFFERS, EVERY PART SUFFERS



Every year, believers around the world join together for the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP), lifting up those who suffer for their faith in Jesus Christ.

IDOP is an opportunity for your church to pause, learn their stories, and intentionally pray for believers following Christ in some of the world's most difficult places.

To help you prepare, International Christian Concern has created a collection of free, ready-to-use IDOP resources for churches, small groups, families, and individuals.

In the IDOP Resource Hub, you'll find:

- Prayer cards with specific ways to pray for persecuted Christian communities
- Videos that bring the stories of persecuted believers to life
- A ready-to-use sermon centered on the true story of a persecuted believer and his family
- Family resources to help your children learn about persecution in an age-appropriate way
- Additional tools to help your church learn about persecution and stay engaged throughout the year.

Whether you're a pastor planning an entire service or simply want to incorporate a few minutes of focused prayer, these resources can help your church pray with understanding, compassion, and purpose.

YOUR PLANNING GUIDE



PRAY WITH PURPOSE

Use ICC's updated prayer cards to guide your congregation through specific needs facing persecuted Christian communities. Print them for your congregation, use them in small groups, or share them digitally throughout the week.

Mark your calendar for ICC's IDOP Prayer Evet on Monday, November 2 at 12p.m. ET



SHARE THEIR STORIES

Help persecution become more than a statistic by introducing your church to real believers and communities facing persecution. Choose from stories from India, Pakistan, Nigeria, and beyond, and show a video during your service, Sunday school class, small group, or church communications.



PREACH ON PERSECUTION

Use ICC's updated sermon as a starting point for your IDOP message. The sermon shares the true story of a persecuted believer and his family and helps connect their experience with the biblical call to remember those who suffer for Christ.

PLANNING GUIDE CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

YOUR PLANNING GUIDE CONTINUED



INCLUDE THE NEXT GENERATION

Help children and teens discover that the persecuted church is *their* church family, too.

The Courage Club | Ages 4-9
An interactive printable magazine introducing younger children to real-life stories of persecuted children courageously following Jesus around the world.

Steadfast | Ages 10-17
True stories and journaling exercises that help teens explore persecution, courage, and the character of God.



HELP YOUR CHURCH UNDERSTAND

Give your congregation context for what believers around the world are facing through ICC's 2026 Global Persecution Index, Persecution 101, ICC's Newsroom, and much more. Follow us on social media to stay up-to-date with the latest persecution news and ICC projects.



TAKE ACTION AND GIVE

After learning of the plight of the persecuted, many believers feel called to respond in different ways, whether that be through raising awareness in their communities, praying, advocating, or giving. If you feel called to help persecuted believers through giving, visit *www.persecution.org/IDOP* to dedicate your gift to helping 4,000 persecuted believers during IDOP 2026.

TIMELINE FOR IDOP

PREPARE

2-4 WEEKS BEFORE

- Visit the IDOP Resource Hub and explore the available materials.
- Decide how IDOP will fit into your church service.
- Select a video, sermon, or other teaching materials.
- Download and print prayer cards.
- Share IDOP with ministry leaders, children's ministry staff, and small-group leaders.

BUILD AWARENESS

1-2 WEEKS BEFORE

- Begin mentioning IDOP during church announcements.
- Share a persecuted believer's story through email or social media.
- Invite your congregation to begin praying.
- Provide resources for children and teens to families or ministry leaders.

IDOP SUNDAY - NOVEMBER 1, 2026

LEARN TOGETHER

- **Share a Story.** Help your congregation understand whom they are praying for.
- **Teach.** Share Scripture or a message about Christian persecution.
- **Pray.** Dedicate intentional time to praying for persecuted believers.
- **Respond.** Give your congregation practical ways to stay informed, pray, advocate, and support the persecuted church.

IDOP VIRTUAL PRAYER CALL - NOV. 2

PRAY TOGETHER

On Monday, November 2 at 12 p.m. ET, join ICC staff and supporters on a virtual prayer call to lift up the persecuted Church and fix our eyes on Jesus. Scroll back to the front of this resource guide to register and share the link with your friends.

AFTER IDOP

KEEP PRAYING

IDOP may happen once a year, but our persecuted brothers and sisters need the prayers of the global church year-round. Invite your congregation to continue through ICC's 30-Day Prayer Challenge, follow the ICC Newsroom, write to an imprisoned Christian, or explore other ways to stay involved.

The first Sunday of November is traditionally recognized as IDOP, but these resources can be used by your church at any time throughout the year.

WHEN FAITH COMES AT A COST

What is persecution?

Religious persecution is the mistreatment of an individual or group because of their faith. The levels of persecution can range from acts of hatred, second-class citizenship, job discrimination, and forced conversion to imprisonment, torture, rape, and death.

How are Christians persecuted?

Believers are persecuted by both society and the government, meaning that sometimes persecution is policy (such as detention and prison), and other times it is the cultural norm (such as harassment). Other common persecution incidents include property damage, displacement from homes, physical assault, and death.



Two Major Sources of Modern-Day Persecution

STATE

In countries around the world, governments persecute Christians. Through blasphemy laws, apostasy laws, and church crackdowns, governments have effectively outlawed the Gospel.

SOCIETY

In many countries (even some that have a Christian majority), there are communities that attack churches, murder pastors, excommunicate converts, and abuse Christian women.

Where does persecution occur?

All over the world. More than 380 million Christians globally face high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith, according to Open Doors International's "World Watch List." This works out to roughly 1 in 7 Christians worldwide being in a situation of high persecution or discrimination. The most extreme cases are found in the 10/40 window.*



**Defined by Christian missionary Luis Bush in the 1990s, referring to countries located between 10 and 40 degrees north of the equator in the eastern hemisphere. These countries deal with the highest levels of socioeconomic challenges and the least access to the Gospel.*

UNDERSTANDING PERSECUTION

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

—ROMANS 8:28

Why does persecution occur?

Persecution is part of the ongoing spiritual battle between the Kingdom of God and the forces of darkness. Satan opposes God's work in the world and seeks to silence those who bear His image and proclaim His truth.

This spiritual conflict takes visible form through earthly powers — governments, ideologies, and societies that reject Christ and His followers. Throughout history, systems rooted in control and fear have targeted Christians as threats to their authority.

Today, believers continue to suffer under oppressive regimes in places like China, North Korea, and Eritrea, as well as under radical religious movements in parts of the Middle East, Africa, and South and Southeast Asia. In these nations, Christians are often minorities, facing discrimination, false accusations, loss of work, imprisonment, and even death for their faith.

In recent decades, radical Islamist groups concentrated in the Middle East ravaged Christian communities across Iraq, Syria, and Libya. Today, the violence has intensified and spread into Sub-Saharan Africa, where jihadist networks like Boko Haram and radical Fulani militants are gaining ground. In the fragile states of the Sahel and Central Africa, countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Christians face targeted attacks, church burning, forced displacement, and kidnapping. This new front of persecution is marked by the collapse of governance, the infiltration of extremist ideology, and the exploitation of poverty and instability to silence the church and erode Christian presence.

Yet, Scripture reminds us that persecution is not meaningless. Jesus said, "You will be hated by all nations because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22). Paul echoes this truth, saying, "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12).

Through persecution, the global church is refined and strengthened. It separates cultural Christianity from true discipleship and unites believers across borders as one body. In suffering, we learn to depend wholly on Christ and the power of His Spirit.

Even now, we hold fast to the promise that "the government will be on His shoulders." Our hope is not in the kingdoms of this world, but in the coming reign of Jesus Christ, our victorious King.



Does persecution happen in the United States?

While religious freedom issues in the United States look very different from the violent oppression Christians face in many other nations, believers here are not exempt from opposition. Christians encounter social and institutional pressures when expressing their faith, especially in workplaces, schools, and public life.

Religious freedom challenges often take the form of legal disputes, policy limitations, or social hostility rather than physical harm.



Although the cost of following Christ may be less severe in the U.S., it reminds us that believers everywhere are called to stand firm in truth and grace, bearing witness to Jesus in a culture that often misunderstands or rejects Him. With the freedoms that we are given in the United States, we have the ability to speak up for our brothers and sisters around the world who are oppressed and suffering for their faith.

Why don't persecuted Christians just leave their country?

It's easy to wonder — why don't persecuted Christians simply leave their countries and start over somewhere safe? But think about your own life for a moment. Imagine leaving behind your family, your church, your language, and the land you've always called home. For most believers living under persecution, the choice to stay isn't a simple one — it's often not a choice at all.



Many face intense government surveillance, travel restrictions, or imprisonment simply for sharing their faith. Others are blacklisted, making it nearly impossible to pass security checkpoints or obtain travel documents. For countless families, the cost of relocation is far beyond reach.

Yet even in the face of danger, God's presence remains their strength. Many believers stay because they feel deeply called to serve where they are — to be a light in the darkness, to reach unbelieving friends and family, and to witness to the power of Christ's love. Their endurance is not born of fear, but of faith. And while some are called to go, others around the world answer God's call to come. To stand alongside the persecuted, to comfort and strengthen the church, and to help bring in the harvest of souls.

For many, staying means suffering. But for all who remain faithful, it also means victory for the Kingdom of God.

Why is religious freedom so important?



Religious freedom is the cornerstone of a tolerant society: allowing citizens to freely practice some of the most intimate beliefs they hold. To acknowledge religious freedom, one must also acknowledge the freedom of thought, speech, assembly, and conscience. When a society acknowledges and promotes religious freedom, it promotes a free exchange of ideas and beliefs, opening the door for the gospel to be genuinely shared.

How is persecution spreading or changing?

While persecution in the Middle East has long been severe, new threats are rising across Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia. Extremist ideologies, unstable governments, and growing hostility toward Christianity are driving violence and displacement. In many areas, entire Christian communities have been uprooted, but their faith remains unshakable.

HOW CAN I HELP THOSE BEING PERSECUTED?

You don't have to be a lawyer, missionary, or underground pastor to make a difference. Every believer has a role to play in strengthening the global body of Christ.

STAY INFORMED

Before we can pray or act, we must understand what our brothers and sisters face around the world. Scripture reminds us, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26). When we know their stories, we can pray and respond with purpose.

Follow ICC for the latest news and stories

- www.persecution.org/news
- @persecutionnews
- @persecuted
- @internationalchristianconcern

PRAY FAITHFULLY

Prayer is the most powerful way to stand with the persecuted church. Many imprisoned believers tell us they can feel the strength of the global church praying for them.

Just as the angel told Daniel, "Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before God, your words were heard" (Daniel 10:12), our prayers are heard and answered by the same faithful God. When we pray, we join Him in His redemptive work among the nations.

SPEAK UP AND TAKE ACTION

Scripture calls us to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Proverbs 31:8). You can begin by sharing what you learn — raising awareness in your church, small group, or online community.

Partner with ICC by signing petitions, contacting legislators, and joining advocacy or assistance efforts that bring real help to persecuted believers. You can also volunteer, intern, or start an awareness initiative in your church.

Together, we can be the church that remembers the suffering, lifts them up in prayer, and takes action to see God's Kingdom advance, even in the hardest-to-reach places.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PERSECUTION?

PROVERBS 24:11-12
Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?

MATTHEW 5:11-12
Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you. . . in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

LUKE 21:12
But before all this, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name.

JOHN 15:19-21
You do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. "No servant is greater than his master." If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. They will treat you this way because of my name.

JOHN 17:14
I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

1 JOHN 3:13
Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.

ACTS 5:40
They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

ACTS 14:22
"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:11-13
To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless . . . when we are persecuted, we endure it. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.

PHILIPPIANS 1:29
For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.

1 THESSALONIANS 3:3-4
When we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.

2 THESSALONIANS 1:4
Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

2 TIMOTHY 3:12
In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

HEBREWS 13:3
Remember those in prison, as though in prison with them.

1 PETER 4:16
However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

LUKE 21:16
You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.

ONE CHURCH. ONE OFFERING. THOUSANDS OF LIVES IMPACTED

HELP 4,000 PERSECUTED BELIEVERS THIS IDOP

This International Day of Prayer, we're asking Christians and churches across the country to do more than remember the persecuted church — we're inviting them to come alongside believers in tangible ways.

We desire to holistically serve 4,000 persecuted Christians during this time at a cost of $300,000.

These gifts help meet believers at the point of their greatest need, including:

- Emergency food and supplies
- Trauma care and healing
- Safe relocation after persecution
- Bibles and Gospel materials
- Long-term recovery and practical support
- And other critical needs facing persecuted Christians







YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Would your church consider dedicating its offering during the week of IDOP to help persecuted Christians?

- **$75** can help one persecuted believer
- **$300** can help one persecuted family receive holistic care and support
- **$3,000** can help 40 believers
- **$7,500** can help 100 believers

Every gift helps us move closer to the goal of serving **4,000** brothers and sisters facing persecution.

To give online, scan the QR code or click here.

CHURCH-OFFERING LOGISTICS ON NEXT PAGE



HOW YOUR CHURCH CAN GIVE

If your church would like to dedicate all or part of its offering during the week of IDOP to support persecuted believers, participating is simple. You can give online at *persecution.org/IDOP* or by scanning the QR code on this page.

Churches may also submit their collected offering by check, made payable and mailed to:

International Christian Concern
P.O. Box 268804
Oklahoma City, OK 73126-8804

If your church would prefer to give by ACH, wire transfer, or another method, contact m.wendt@persecution.org.

Every gift will help us work toward our goal of **holistically serving 4,000 persecuted Christians** through needs such as emergency relief, trauma care, safe relocation, Gospel materials, and more. Whether your congregation helps one believer, one family, or an entire community, your church can tangibly stand with brothers and sisters suffering for their faith.

- **$75** can help one persecuted believer
- **$300** can help one persecuted family receive holistic care and support
- **$7,500** can help a community of 100 believers

To give online, scan the QR code or click here.

International Christian Concern (ICC) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) (all donations tax-deductible). ICC makes every effort to honor donor wishes in regards to their gifts. Occasionally, a situation will arise where a project is no longer viable. ICC will redirect those donated funds to one of our other funds that is most similar to the donor's original wishes.

IDOP RESOURCES OVERVIEW

If you're viewing this PDF online, click the resource title to be taken to the resource.

HOPE IN THE WORLD'S HARDEST PLACES



VIKRAM'S STORY



FAMILY RESOURCES



THE COURAGE CLUB (AGES 4-9)

STEADFAST (AGES 10-17)

PRAYER CARDS





UNDERGROUND CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

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