

# International Prayer Connections

*A Monthly Journal to Guide Intercession for Our World*



JUNE 2019



Greetings!

We are pleased to bring you IPC Connections for June 2019.

We trust you will be blessed and encouraged as you read the editorial this month, entitled 'Immersed in Pentecost' - in which we look at the importance of experiencing the fulness of the Holy Spirit in our lives and its role in empowering our prayer lives.

A common thread in several articles this month is that of human rights abuse in its many forms. We focus on sex trafficking in America, repression in Afghanistan, suppression of the Church in China, martyrdom in Burkina Faso and abuse of power in Romania. Let's pray into these complex issues and hear from God as we intercede for the nations.

International Prayer Connections is produced and distributed freely each month to inform God's praying people around the world. We are grateful to those who have given generously to enable this to happen and continue to need such support for this and our other transformational prayer initiatives.

If you can make a gift towards our costs by giving to our funding arm, the Transformation Prayer Foundation, we would appreciate it. Please [click here](#).

Thank you for partnering with us in prayer in these crucial times.

Wishing you His continued blessings,

**Jason Hubbard - Executive Coordinator | John D Robb – Chairman - International Prayer Connect**

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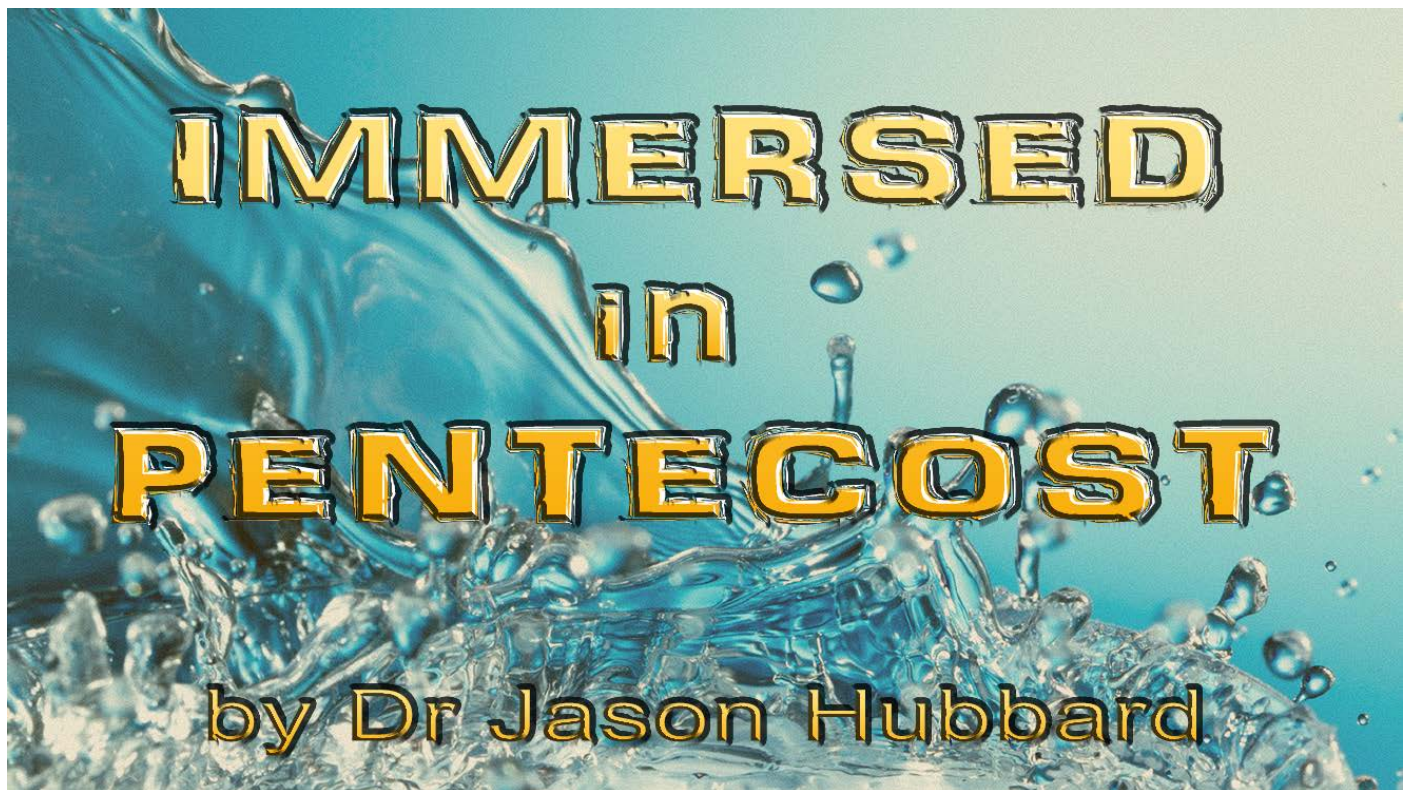
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## 01 Editorial: Immersed in Pentecost - Dr Jason Hubbard



As we approach Pentecost Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019, let's ask the Lord Jesus for a fresh 'infilling' of the person and presence of the Holy Spirit. One of the keys to a powerful intercessory prayer life is 'praying in the Spirit.' Dutch Sheets states boldly, "Without a doubt the greatest single key to successful intercession is learning to co-operate with the Holy Spirit allowing him to be all he was sent to be in us!"

**As John the Baptist stated,**

"This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." <sup>32</sup> And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes in and with the Holy Spirit.'" (John 1:30-33) God-the-Son in our flesh who comes to take away the sin of the world, is also the One who comes to baptize in and with the Holy Spirit. The two works belong together. When these two titles are kept together the gospel is really 'good news.' Jesus-to-the-rescue takes away sin, and then baptizes humans in and with the Spirit of God.

The term baptize simply means to 'immerse.' The Greek text uses both 'in' and 'with,' the Holy Spirit. The 'in' relates to that which we are immersed into, and the 'with' speaks of that which saturates us or literally, overwhelms us. Therefore, Jesus the Baptist dunks us in and drenches us with the very life of the Triune God!

Dallas Willard uses the word 'engulfment' to describe this experience. Jesus promises an engulfment in the Spirit of God. He promises to clothe us, or dress us with 'power from on High.' Jesus of Nazareth, God-in-flesh, redeems us from the power and grip of sin and then baptizes us, immerses us, soaks us, dresses us, saturates us, drenches us, and marinates us with the very Life of the Living God!

When the text says that Jesus 'baptizes,' it is in the present tense. In New Testament Greek the tenses of verbs speak of the time of action and the kind of action. The 'present' tense speaks of continuous action, literally 'to keep on.' Jesus is the one who keeps on baptizing in and with the Holy Spirit. In other words, He comes to keep on soaking us, keep on drenching us, keep on immersing us, keep on filling us with the Holy Spirit, until every fiber of our being radiates with the very presence of the Living God!

We see this confirmed in the story of the early church! Jesus promises, "in a few days you will be baptized in and with the Holy Spirit not many days from now"(Acts 1:5). On the day of Pentecost, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit"(Acts 2:4). And then a few chapters later in Acts 4:31, the text says, "the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit"(Acts 4:31).

Paul says that it is God's will that we 'be filled with the Spirit.' Not just once, twice, but over and over again!

"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit," (Eph. 5:17-18)

Whereas wine can ruin one's judgment leading to debauchery, in contrast 'being filled with the Spirit,' leads to empowerment, self-control and a life exhibiting the fruits of the Holy Spirit! It is the nature of Jesus to keep on giving his life to us. He fills us and keeps on filling us in stages, 'grace upon grace' as John puts it, transforming us from, 'glory to glory' as Paul teaches us (2 Cor. 3:18).

## **Barriers**

I believe there are two common reasons why many do not experience the fullness of the Spirit in their lives. The first is fear. We fear that if we really open up to Spirit we might be swept up into something beyond our control. The fact it is, Jesus is beyond our control. We are talking about the Living Lord Jesus coming to occupy and possess us by the Holy Spirit! Out of fear we can settle for a form of religion devoid of power. We try to domesticate the One who is an All Consuming Fire and settle for the predictable even if it is no longer satisfying.

The second reason is lack of hunger. We think we have all we need. We are content with what God has done for us, and we no longer come to God desperately needy and poor in Spirit.

However, the reality is that we need the life of God ever-increasing, ever flowing like a river out of our innermost being (John 7:37-39). We need to come more and more under the sway and influence of the Holy Spirit!

We need to be invaded, and permeated, saturated, and flooded with the life of the Spirit in every aspect of our lives! From the very beginning God has revealed his passion to give his Very Self to the world.

The Holy One intends to fill the whole created order with his Glory! The filling of the Holy Spirit makes fully alive, fully human! We are finally what we were created to be when filled with and animated by the life of the Triune God!

In Luke 11, Jesus writes,



“And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

The Father is a **good** father and gives **good** gifts to his children. In our life of prayer we come to him in dependence recognizing we can't do anything apart from Jesus.

We need HELP! As Alvin VanderGriend states, “The Father is in the prayer-assistance business. He has appointed his Son, Jesus to be our **enthroned** prayer assistant, and his Holy Spirit to be our **indwelling** prayer assistant.” Jesus is telling us to ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking for the great Helper, the third person of the Trinity!

So this Jesus comes as a Lamb- to- the- rescue to take away the sin of the world. And He comes to baptize again and again and again in and with the Holy Spirit. And whenever he does “there enters into our helplessness and fatigue, ‘a surge of new life,’ and we are freshly empowered, “to do the undoable, to face the un-faceable, to bear the unbearable.” (William Barclay)

Let's **return** to the Holy Spirit, turning away from our own works to a total dependence on the Holy Spirit!

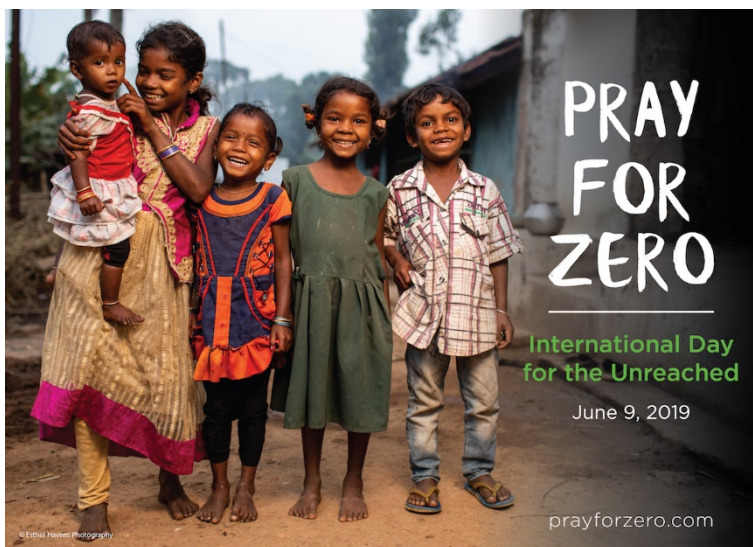
**Dr Jason Hubbard - Executive Coordinator**  
**International Prayer Connect**

## Prayer News & Events

### 02 Pray for Zero – June 9<sup>th</sup> 2019

We live in a historical time. Every single people group can be reached with God's Word and kingdom within the next decade. Millions are still waiting to have access to the Gospel. What is Jesus calling us to do?

Well, there is one thing that we have seen God use over and over again to accomplish His eternal purposes: prayer. This upcoming Pentecost, God is uniting the international body of Christ to refocus on what matters. The unreached. Hundreds of like-minded ministries and thousands of churches are united under the Pray for ZERO banner so the unreached are no longer waiting.



Pray for Zero is an international prayer movement dedicated to the provision of God's Word and kingdom among the remaining unreached, Bibleless peoples. There are currently over 2,000 people groups without access to any Scripture in their language. Through social media and regional prayer gatherings, we connect God's people to the goal of seeing all remaining translation projects started within this next decade.

You are invited to unite with millions of others to pray for the number of unreached people groups to be brought down to ZERO. Each year we will gather to pray until we live in a world where every single person has access to the Word of God in their language and a local expression of the body of Christ.

If we love those still waiting for a chance to hear of Christ through His Word, then we should do whatever we can to raise awareness so that others will join us in this effort. We encourage you to adopt a people group, pray for them frequently, and post pictures and videos on the International Day for the Unreached — June 9, 2019.

**Take a stand. Do your part. Pray for Zero.** [Visit prayforzero.com](http://prayforzero.com).

“Always pray and never give up.” Luke 18b (NLT)

**Solomon Lujan**

## **03 Year of the Frontier – May 2019 to May 2020**



May 2019 through May 2020

*A time of united, informed prayer for the largest gaps in work among the unreached!*

**YEAR OF THE FRONTIER May 2019 through May 2020** is a previously unprecedented time of united, informed prayer for the largest gaps in work among the unreached around the world! For thirteen months starting May 2019, join prayer networks around the world coordinating with:

- The Alliance for the Unreached
- The Ethné Movement
- The 24:14 Coalition
- Joshua Project's "Unreached of the Day" (<http://JoshuaProject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday>)
- Frontier Venture's *Global Prayer Digest*

as well as many others to pray for every one of the 400 Frontier People Groups (FPGs) with an in-country population over 500,000 as field efforts collaborate to see movements to Christ in every people and place.

**What are Frontier People Groups?** These FPGs contain nearly all of the one-quarter of all humanity currently the most isolated from the good news that Jesus came for all peoples. Less than 1 in 1,000 are followers of Jesus in these groups. Only 1 out of every 100 cross-cultural laborers work among these groups! Until Jesus followers unite in obeying His commission, these masses have no hope of hearing about and being introduced to Jesus before they die! This unprecedented collaboration will focus on the

fulfilment of God's promise to bless all peoples through Jesus movements healing and restoring broken families and communities.

**Why is prayer important?** Extraordinary prayer is foundational to every movement to Christ. Prayer is the first domino to fall leading to change in spiritual receptivity to the gospel and fruitfulness. Leviticus 26:8 “Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand...”—there is multiplied power in agreement. As intercessors faithfully lift up these specific people groups and believers reach out, God does what only God can do to release harvest.

**Learn more about the "Year of the Frontier"** at: <http://Go31.org/yof>

Joshua Project <https://joshuaproject.net/frontier>

“Reaching the Unreached” video <https://vimeo.com/244739881> and

“The State of the World” video <https://globalprn.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=b371ecb81ea5dd83cb1ed45cd&id=b68ef93f6a&e=3ba0399bc5>

**Your prayers are vital to extending God's blessing in Jesus to *all* the remaining Frontier People Groups.**

**Draw close to God by embracing His passion to bless these Frontier People Groups. Invite others to join you in:**

\* Praying daily for every one of these 400 Frontier People Groups over this year:

To get daily prayer materials via email: <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/email> or <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org> Then submit your email in the top right box.

Apps to help you are available for Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=umot.tw.dgp>

or iPhone: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/global-prayer-digest/id1181417800?l=es&mt=8>

\* UPG of the Day Widget to customize for your website:

<https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/widget>

\* On social media, use these hashtags to raise awareness: #YearOfTheFrontier, #FrontierPeopleGroups, #UnreachedPeopleGroups, or #RememberTheUnreached.

\* Promoting the *international Day of Prayer for the Unreached* (<http://AllianceForTheUnreached.org>)

\* Partner to focus on a specific people group through [www.InherittheNations.net](http://www.InherittheNations.net)

\* Preparing for the Global Outreach Day 2020 (<http://globaloutreachday.com/2020>), which will coincide with the culmination of the *Year of the Frontier*. During the entire month of **May 2020**, our goal is to **mobilize 100 million Christians** to pray for their neighbors and nations as well as to share the Gospel with them.

We believe that together with many denominations and ministries it will be possible to reach 1 BILLION people with the Gospel and for prayer-care-share to become an ongoing lifestyle for every follower of Christ.



More at <http://go31.org/yof/>



## 04 United Prayer Rising Europe – 8-11<sup>th</sup> July 2019

**51 Nations gathering – For Prayer, For Unity, For a Continent.**

**United Prayer Rising - Europe is a prayer and worship gathering happening this summer at Ashburnham Place in Sussex, UK bringing together people from all over Europe to contend for an awakening amongst the next generation. We believe God is raising up an army of passionate worshippers who will pray together to see their continent saved. This is God's time for Europe!**

**UPRising Europe** is part of the global UPRising movement birthed out of the World Prayer Assembly in 2012 in Indonesia. The first UPRising event was held in Seoul, South Korea in July 2016. Since then, there have been UPRising events in the Philippines, South Africa, Mongolia, Bolivia, Malaysia, Canada, Chile and Jakarta, Indonesia.

We are excited to now host an Uprising event for the continent of Europe. This is such a critical time for the continent – much is being shaken whilst God is stirring the hearts of young people for radical prayer and mission.

The backbone of **UPRising Europe** will be 72 hours of non-stop worship and prayer led by worship teams from all over Europe. These are the grassroots, passionate worship and prayer leaders who are faithful to where God has placed them and willing to contend for Europe.

Out of this will flow prayer and intercession for Europe, with inspiration from speakers in our main sessions. We will be hosting practical seminars equipping young people in a lifestyle of prayer, fasting and evangelism. Finally we will be commissioning people to take this fire back to their nations.



**Uprising Europe will be from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at Ashburnham Place, Battle, East Sussex.** We want to invite anyone with a heart for Europe and the next generation to come and join us. Ashburnham Place, a retreat and conference centre, is set in beautiful grounds with lakes and woodlands. You can come and camp, or stay in the main house.

JJ Waters, Director of **UPRising Europe** said, *“Following God’s lead, we are incredibly excited to gather together people from every nation in Europe to contend for an awakening amongst the next generation. This is such a critical time for Europe – God is moving powerfully but we know there is so much more to come. He is stirring the hearts of young people for radical prayer and missions, in what is now one of the most unreached continents on earth. Now is the time to come together from different nations, across denominations, honouring fathers and mothers, and to worship and pray for a mighty move of God in Europe.”*

The ticket price for this event is generously subsidised to make it affordable for delegates from across the continent. The UPRising Europe team would welcome offers of sponsorship from Churches, organisations and individuals who would like to sow into this event, for Europe.

Further details about the event, tickets, pricing or sponsorship can be found on our website <https://www.uprisingeurope.org/> or please email us at [andy@uprisingeurope.org](mailto:andy@uprisingeurope.org).

Uprising Europe is working with partners including YWAM, Burn 24-7, the World Prayer Centre, Ashburnham Place, Elim Prayer, Maranatha, Crosswinds Prayer Trust and Interprayer UK. Overseeing, supporting and endorsing the United Prayer Rising Europe event are Ian Cole of the World Prayer Centre, Birmingham, UK and Brian Mills of Interprayer, UK. They are both respected elders of the movement for prayer in the UK and worldwide.

## 05 IPC Calendar

30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World - 6 May - 4 June 2019

[www.30daysprayer.com/](http://www.30daysprayer.com/)

Year of the Frontier – May 2019 to May 2020

<http://go31.org/yof/>

Pray for Zero – 9 June 2019

[www.prayforzero.com](http://www.prayforzero.com)

School of Prayer for the Nations - 9 Jun - 6 July 2019

[www.allnations.ac.uk/courses/short-courses/school-prayer-nations](http://www.allnations.ac.uk/courses/short-courses/school-prayer-nations)

United Prayer Rising Europe – 8-11 July 2019

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

One God - One Day - One Africa – 31st May 2020

[www.1gda.org](http://www.1gda.org)

South East Asia Prayer Council Conference – 8-11 October 2019

<https://www.seaprayers2019singapore.org/>

Go 2020 May 2020

<https://www.go2020.world>



## Prayers for the world

### 06 Sex Trafficking - So much can happen in 8 Days – VIDEO

WHAT YOU MUST KNOW! Jaco Booyens On SkyWatch On Why Sex Trafficking Is Bigger Than Most Comprehend.

Every year, more than 3.2 million children in America are sex-trafficked, abused, abandoned, or neglected. Children as young as 9 years old are being bought and sold for sex in America with the average age of young girls being 13.

In addition to trafficking, one in seven Americans are sexually abused as children.

Tragically, 1,500 to 2,000 children die each year at the hands of those who are supposed to be their caretakers. And the remainder are often (sadly) disregarded or experience a combination of these abuses.



Watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUSAg66nwEw>

YOU CAN HELP! PLEASE VISIT: <https://www.skywatchtv.com/2019/05/02...>

#### Child Trafficking Victims:

- Child trafficking victims, like other child victims, come from many backgrounds and include both boys and girls across a wide range of ages.
- Children are trafficked to the U.S. from all regions of the world and represent a variety of different races, ethnic groups and religions.
- They may be brought to the U.S. legally or smuggled in.
- Internationally trafficked children, especially adolescents, may be lured overseas to the U.S. through the promise of work or school and the opportunity to send money back to their families.
- Children are also vulnerable to kidnappers, pimps, and professional brokers.
- Some children are sold to traffickers by their families, who may or may not have an understanding of what will happen to the child.
- U.S. citizen children may also be trafficked within the U.S., and come from multiple racial groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

Click the link to read the Needs of Rescued Trafficking Victims: <https://arkofhopeforchildren.org/child-trafficking/what-rescued-child-sex-trafficking-victims-need>

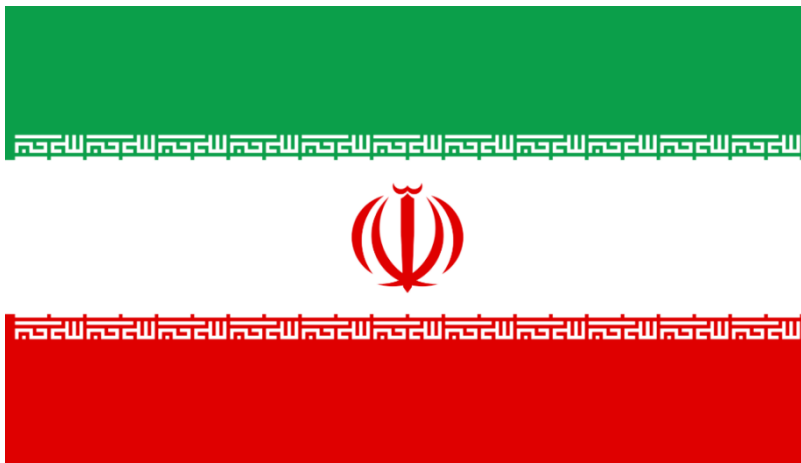
**Pray:** for more resources for the police and authorities tasked with apprehending the traffickers and rescuing the victims.

**Pray:** for the male and female victims – for physical healing and the healing of memories.

**Pray:** for the non-profit agencies working with the victims of all ages.

## 07 The Staggering Rise of the Church in Iran

Robert Bruce, a Scottish missionary to Iranian Muslims in the late nineteenth century, wrote home to his supporters, “I am not reaping the harvest; I scarcely claim to be sowing the seed; I am hardly ploughing the soil; but I am gathering out the stones. That, too, is missionary work; let it be supported by loving sympathy and fervent prayer.”



For many years, Iran was one of the most difficult regions of the world to reach with the gospel. A significant development occurred in 1979, however, with the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The ruling monarch, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, was overthrown, and in his place an Islamic Republic was birthed, led by the Ayatollah Khomeini. Sharia law became the law of the land, and Muslim clerics became the heads of state.

Many in those days believed the revolution would lead to a time of flourishing in Iranian society. The new regime made great promises about rights and economic progress, as Iran was finally free from the influence of the West. The laws of man would be replaced by the laws of God, they claimed. Under the Republic, conversion to any other religion was considered apostasy and could be punished with death.

### Door Opens

As we near the fortieth anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, however, we see that the prayers of many Christians over the years have been answered, and the climate in Iran is vastly different. The gospel has spread throughout the land in unprecedented fashion despite increased persecution of Christian believers. To use the words of the apostle Paul, “A wide door for effective work has opened . . . and there are many adversaries” (1 Corinthians 16:9).

As of 1979, there were about five hundred known Christians from a Muslim background in Iran. In 2005, it was estimated that there were 40,000 ethnic Iranian Christians (not including ethnic minority Christians who live in Iran). That number grew to about 175,000 Christians in 2010, according to the Joshua Project. Today, the average estimates of Christians within Iran range from 300,000 to upwards of one million, according to some missions experts. Operation World, a missions research organization, continues to list Iran as having the fastest-growing evangelical church in the world. In fact, more Iranians have become Christians in the last twenty years than in the previous 1,300 years, since Islam came to Iran.

### Four Reasons for Growth

Several factors have contributed to the rapid growth of the church in Iran. Here are four of the most important.

#### 1. Disillusionment with Islam

Since the time of the revolution, the Islamic regime, which promised much in the way of economic development and freedom, has not delivered. Rather than prosperity and growth, the economy stagnated. The people also have been oppressed — women punished for not covering their hair, and others punished

for speaking out freely in protest. As a result, the country has isolated itself further from the rest of the world.

Ironically, because the Islamic Republic in Iran has tied religion and state so closely together, the people's disappointment with the government has led to great skepticism of Islam. Consequently, Iranians have become increasingly open to hearing the Christian message.

## **2. Persecution**

The rise of persecution against Christians in Iran has served both as a sign of the rapid growth of Christianity within the country and as fuel for further growth. In the 1990s, several key leaders of the church in Iran were killed. One of the most famous martyrs, Mehdi Dibaj, gave a defense before the Islamic courts prior to his death that has become a rallying cry for many Christians in Iran. Dibaj declared, I would rather have the whole world against me, but know that the Almighty God is with me; be called an apostate, but know that I have the approval of the God of glory. . . .

Life for me is an opportunity to serve him, and death is a better opportunity to be with Christ. Therefore I am not only satisfied to be in prison for the honor of his Holy Name, but am ready to give my life for the sake of Jesus my Lord and enter his kingdom sooner, the place where the elect of God enter to everlasting life.

Examples like this have emboldened the church as the faithful remember the words of Jesus, "Because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19). In 2010, many church planters and leaders were arrested. I had the privilege of visiting with one of these faithful brothers after he served five years in prison. He recounted the moment when he received news that many of his colleagues were being arrested.

Briefly, he considered fleeing. But then he remembered the words of Jesus from John 10, that he is not the hired hand who sees the wolves coming and flees, but he is rather the good shepherd, who lays his life down for his sheep (John 10:11–12). He told me he went home knowing it would lead to his arrest, but he saw prison as an assignment by God to be a ministry post for him to reach many within prison.

This persecution has served to motivate further evangelistic zeal among Iranian Christians. These faithful servants are modern-day examples of Paul, who once wrote, "Most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Philippians 1:14).

## **3. The Diaspora and Use of Media**

A countless number of Iranian Christians have been scattered around the world. Many of these saints sense a unique calling to continue supporting the work of gospel advancement within Iran from the outside.

The advancement of technology through the Internet and satellite TV has made the Christian message more accessible to Iranians who may have never even met a Christian. The diaspora Christians have been active in broadcasting the gospel and Bible teaching into Iran. In the last decade, social media also has been a powerful tool to reach Iranians and teach them the truths of Scripture.

## **4. Bible Distribution**

Although persecution has not produced the results that the Iranian authorities wanted, they have continued to work hard to stamp out the message of Christianity. The Bible (especially the New Testament) is banned literature in Iran.



But the people have been hungry for the word of God. There have been over two million New Testaments printed in recent years for dissemination in Iran, and about 180,000 entire Bibles have been distributed within the country. As Paul told Timothy, “The word of God is not bound!” (2 Timothy 2:9).

### **Three Ways to Pray**

These are some factors that have contributed to the rapid growth of the church in Iran. But ultimately, the kingdom of Christ is spreading within Iran because God’s Spirit is moving powerfully. Though there has been great progress, the need for prayer and support continues to be great. Would you join me in praying for Iran — its people and leaders? Here are three ways you can pray for the church.

#### **1. Courage**

Although the number of house churches and believers is growing every day, the opposition continues. Iranian Christians continue to be arrested and charged with acting against national security. House churches continue to meet secretly while shifting their meeting times and locations to stay undetected. Christians continue to evangelize, knowing they are putting their lives at risk.

#### **2. Unity**

Since most of the activity of the church is done secretly, the Christians are isolated from each other. Iranian leaders are forced to work covertly and therefore apart from each other. Security concerns make collaborative efforts difficult, even among ministries outside of Iran that work within the country. All of this creates obstacles for unity.

#### **3. Trained Leaders**

The nature of the underground church is such that, many times, house-church leaders are unqualified and untrained, and sometimes, there is no pastor in the group and the gathered believers are being fed solely through satellite TV. Some of the teaching that the church absorbs is not sound theology. Iranians don’t have the same access to Christian literature and training as many believers do throughout the rest of the world. There are ministries who are already working hard to meet this need by making quality training available for leaders, and we need to pray for this work.

These words of Jesus may sum up the situation best in Iran: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37–38). Let’s pray the Lord of the harvest continues to send his laborers throughout Iran, so that millions more Iranians find forgiveness, peace, and the hope of glory through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Article by Afshin Ziafat, Pastor, Frisco, Texas - (@afshinziafat) is lead pastor of Providence Church in Frisco, Texas. His passion is to teach the word of God as the authority and guide for life, to preach Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Redeemer of mankind, and to proclaim the love of Christ as the greatest treasure and hope in life. He and his wife, Meredith, currently reside in Frisco with their three children.

## 08 Bosnia: Prayer for the Church

Churches Led by the Holy Spirit - Before Jesus went up to heaven, he told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father - the Holy Spirit. They did, and it was by the power of the Spirit that the very first movement to Christ began. 3,000 were baptized in one day, with believers added daily.



Again and again throughout the book of Acts we see the Holy Spirit initiating, empowering, and leading the early church. By the Holy Spirit, the disciples proclaimed the gospel fearlessly. They were empowered by the Spirit to speak boldly in the face of imprisonment, courts, opposition, and even death. Yes, and it was through the leading of the Holy Spirit that the church sent out the first people to take the gospel where it was not known.

Likewise, as we pray for a movement in Bosnia of disciples making disciples, we long to see churches following that very first model of being led by the Holy Spirit.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

Going Before the Father:

- **Pray for the Holy Spirit to stir and convict souls in this nation— and that the result would be commitment to Christ.**
- **Pray for those who know Christ and those who will soon come to him, that they will live empowered and emboldened by the Spirit in their daily lives.**
- **Pray that obedience to the Holy Spirit would be central to new churches as they form.**

## 09 Afghanistan: Women Activists Fear Return Of Repressions

Khalida Khorsand, a 35-year-old rights activist from the western Afghan city of Herat, is skeptical about Taliban claims that it has dispensed with its strict rules against girls' education and women working.

The militant Islamic group made the declaration in the midst of recent peace talks with U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad aimed at



bringing an end to the long U.S. military presence in Afghanistan.

But Khorsand still remembers the notorious repressions under Taliban rule as a teenager in the western city of Herat when she risked the death penalty to study literature in a class disguised as a women's sewing group.

"After nearly 18 years without the Taliban in power, we now see that the Taliban are coming back in Afghanistan and there haven't been big changes for women's lives -- especially in rural areas," says Khorsand, who has dedicated much of her life since 2001 to advancing women's rights in western Afghanistan.

Even without the Taliban in power in Herat, Khorsand says, many hard-fought gains for women since the collapse of the Taliban regime already are under threat.

She attributes that situation to what she calls "a Taliban way of thinking" by many Afghans and a proliferation of unregistered religious schools in Herat teaching "radical Islam" to as many as 50,000 young people.

If the Taliban gets a role in the Afghan government as part of a peace deal, as Khorsand expects, she fears a floodgate will be opened for resurgent "radical Islamists" in Herat.

"I don't know why this has been allowed to happen under the current government of Afghanistan since 2014," Khorsand laments. "They are not paying attention to the rise of fundamentalists and radical groups in Herat.

"Now the city has become a safe haven for the radical groups that support the ideology of the Taliban," Khorsand says. "The fundamentalist groups in Herat are very organized and have a lot of money. They take the young people into madrasahs and teach to them the principles of the Taliban, and they are having an enormous impact on the young generation."

Those groups already have gained backing from municipal authorities for an unofficial ban on live musical performances in Herat and for a ban on celebrating Valentine's Day -- with both practices being declared "unIslamic."

In rural areas of Herat Province, where Khorsand worked for years to help women who are victims of domestic violence, Khorsand says she has seen disturbing signs of support for the punishments doled out by the Taliban under its strict enforcement of Islamic Shari'a law -- amputating the hands of thieves, publicly flogging people for drinking alcohol, and stoning to death those who engage in adultery.

Students at Herat's madrasahs deny being radical Islamists. But they also support a return to the prohibitions and punishments of the Taliban era.

"Allah says cut off the hands of a male thief and a female thief," says Jan Agha Jami, a 21-year-old at the Fakhr al-Madares madrasah in Herat. "When men and women commit adultery, whip them if they are single. If they are married, they should be stoned, and the Koran's rulings should be implemented in public.

"Music concerts are absurd because they are forbidden," Jami tells RFE/RL. "Music is bad for the mind, memory, and even human psyche. When a girl performs in front of strangers, the whole society is corrupted."

Reflecting on the growing popularity of such beliefs in Herat, Khorsand says "it makes no difference for women in Afghanistan if the Taliban exists or doesn't exist."

"The Taliban's way of thinking about women is the way many people are thinking in Afghanistan," she says. "A lot of Afghans have traditional ways of thinking and they believe the talk of the Taliban. Unfortunately, much of their way of thinking is against the rights of women."

### Move Forward, Step Back

To be sure, Khorsand says there have been important advances for Afghan women since 2001 -- including language in the Afghan Constitution that enshrines the right to education and to work.

Women are members of parliament and can be seen on television, competing in sports, and performing in concerts in Kabul.

But the Afghan government since the collapse of the Taliban regime has included many conservative Islamists and former warlords whose attitudes about women are similar to the Taliban.

Sima Simar, the head of Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission, says the gains for women since 2001 can easily be overturned and have rarely been implemented in rural areas where most Afghans live.

The 2018 Women, Peace, and Security Index by Georgetown University and the Peace Research Institute of Oslo ranks Afghanistan as the second-worst place in the world to be a woman. Only Syria was ranked worse.

That study notes that only 16 percent of Afghanistan's workforce is female and that half of all Afghan women have four years or less of education.

UNICEF, the United Nations children's agency, says only half of school-aged Afghan girls now go to school, and that only one out of five girls under 15 are literate.

Nearly two out of three Afghan girls are married when they are teenagers or younger. On average, they are sent by their parents into arranged marriages between the ages of 15 and 16.

Most imprisoned Afghan women have been jailed for so-called "morality crimes," such as leaving an abusive husband or demanding to marry a man of their own choosing.

**Pray: That the steady advances being made towards improving womens rights will not be overturned.**

**Pray: That boys and girls will get equal access to good education, especially in the rural areas.**

**Pray: For improved employment opportunities for women.**

**Pray: For those who work with and speak up for the oppressed women and children in Afghan society - that their voice will be heard and acted upon.**



## 10 Iran Threatens To Resume High-Level Uranium Enrichment Amid U.S. Sanctions

Iran's president said the Islamic republic will resume high-level enrichment of uranium if world powers do not protect its interests against U.S. sanctions.

Hassan Rohani's address to the nation was aired by state television on May 8, the anniversary of President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from a landmark nuclear agreement.

The announcement further escalates tensions between Tehran and Western nations -- first and foremost, the United States, which this week said it was deploying an aircraft carrier battle group to waters near Iran.

Rohani said the remaining signatories of the 2015 accord -- Britain, France, Germany, China, and Russia -- had 60 days to take measures to protect Iran's oil and banking sectors.

Western officials reacted cautiously to Rohani's announcement.

In London, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, speaking alongside British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, said Washington will wait to see if Tehran follows through on its threats before deciding its next move.

The White House, meanwhile, announced new economic sanctions targeting Iran's steel, copper, aluminum, and mining sectors, all key sources of revenue for the country.

"Tehran can expect further actions unless it fundamentally alters its conduct," Trump said in a statement released by the White House. "I look forward to someday meeting with the leaders of Iran in order to work out an agreement and, very importantly, taking steps to give Iran the future it deserves."

In his speech, Rohani said Iran will start reducing some of its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal and will no longer export enriched uranium and heavy water to other nations as stipulated in the accord.

He said Iran would begin to build up its stockpiles of low enriched uranium and of heavy water, which is used in nuclear reactors, including a reactor that could produce weapons-grade plutonium.

If the Europeans fail to compensate for the unilateral American sanctions, he said, Iran will resume construction of the Arak nuclear reactor, a facility that was shut down, and its key components dismantled.

"If the five countries join negotiations and help Iran to reach its benefits in the fields of oil and banking, Iran will return to its commitments according to the nuclear deal," Rohani said.

However, Rohani warned of a "strong reaction" if European leaders instead sought to impose more sanctions. He did not elaborate.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also tweeted: "After a year of patience, Iran stops measures that [the United States] has made impossible to continue."



Other European signatories of the deal urged Iran to uphold the nuclear pact and said they want to keep the Iran deal alive.

French Defense Minister Florence Parly warned that if Iran did not keep its commitments, re-imposing sanctions would be considered.

In Berlin, the office of German Chancellor Angela Merkel said: "We as Europeans, as Germans, will play our part and we expect full implementation from Iran as well."

At his news conference with Pompeo, Hunt said that Iran's threat to resume higher enrichment of uranium is an "unwelcome step" and urged Tehran to adhere to the deal.

Russia, meanwhile, has blamed the United States for the crisis, a point Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov repeated during a news conference in Moscow with Zarif.

"The U.S. is to blame for the situation and it makes it difficult for both Iran to fulfill its obligations and...for the general state of the nuclear nonproliferation regime," Lavrov said.

Zarif insisted that Iran's latest decision did not violate the agreement, and asserted it was provoked by U.S. actions toward Iran. He said Iran will uphold its obligations if European signatories to the deal uphold theirs.

China, which was also a signatory to the deal, said maintaining and implementing "the comprehensive agreement is the shared responsibility of all parties."

"We call on all relevant parties to exercise restraint, strengthen dialogue, and avoid escalating tensions," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang.

The 2015 nuclear pact, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, lifted crippling economic sanctions in exchange for Tehran agreeing to curb parts of its nuclear program.

Last year, Trump announced the U.S. pullout, arguing it was flawed because it did not include curbs on Iran's development of ballistic missiles or Tehran's support for proxies in the Middle East.

Washington also reinstated sweeping sanctions that have badly hit the Iranian economy.

Despite the U.S. moves, Tehran has continued to comply with the terms of the deal, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

European backers of the deal have been trying to salvage the agreement, but Tehran has complained that the process is too slow.

Last month, the U.S. administration announced it would not permit importers of Iranian oil to buy it without facing U.S. sanctions. Oil exports are a major source of revenue for the Iranian economy.

On May 8, Tim Morrison, Trump's special envoy on weapons of mass destruction, threatened that the United States was ready to impose more sanctions "very soon" and warned European nations against doing business with Tehran.

With reporting by the AP, Reuters, BBC, and AFP

More: <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-to-reduce-commiments-to-to-nuclear-deal/29928087.html?ltflags=mailer>

**Pray: that the disagreement will not lead to nuclear proliferation**

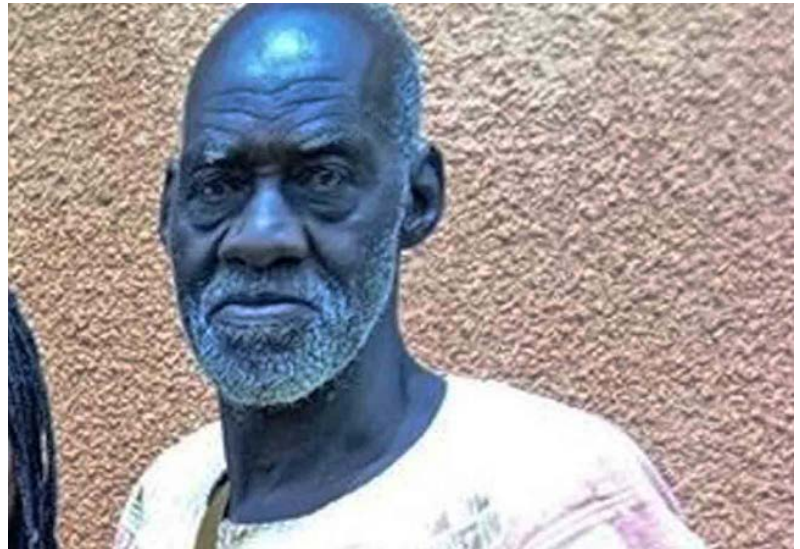
**Pray: for the ordinary Iranian citizens affected by the economic sanctions**

**Pray: that Iran will comply fully with the nuclear deal**

## 11 Burkina Faso: 6 killed for following Jesus

THEY REFUSED TO DENOUNCE JESUS —  
PASTOR, 5 OTHERS SHOT AFTER CHURCH  
SERVICE IN BURKINA FASO

Last Sunday seemed like any Sunday for 80-year-old Pastor Pierre Oult, who has spent 40 years serving his church and Sirgadji village community in the northeastern Soum province of Burkina Faso. On April 28, he gathered for worship with his congregation in the West African country. And like every Sunday, he preached the Word of God with the wisdom that seasoned years of life and ministry bring.



But shortly after the service, an ordinary Sunday suddenly turned deadly and a church building where worshippers had just gathered became a crime scene.

### KILLED FOR FOLLOWING JESUS

At about 1 pm, while Pastor Pierre was still talking with several congregants in the churchyard, a dozen men on motorbikes stormed the area.

A local leader who wished to remain anonymous told World Watch Monitor: “The assailants asked the Christians to convert to Islam, but the pastor and the others refused.”

Reportedly, the attackers gathered Pastor Pierre and the five other congregants under a tree and then confiscated their Bibles and cell phones.

“Then they called them, one after the other, behind the church building where they shot them dead,” the leader said.

In addition to Pastor Pierre, the attackers killed his son, Wend-Kuni, and his brother-in-law (a church deacon), Zoéyandé Sawadogo, as well as believers Sayouba and Arouna Sawadogo, and a primary school teacher, Elie Boena. Another was seriously injured and taken to a nearby hospital.

The men then set the church building and two motorbikes on fire. Before they left, they stole sheep and a bag of rice from Pastor Pierre’s home.

He and his five congregants were buried the same day in a ceremony that drew people from both Christian and Muslim communities. The pastor leaves behind his wife and six other children.

Other locals reported that the next day, the same attackers (some of them known to village residents as “young men who’ve been radicalized”) came back into the village “searching for Christians.”

The sources say the armed groups can move with impunity because of the lack of law enforcement in the area in the West African country.

#### **“I WOULD RATHER DIE THAN LEAVE”**

Previously, Pastor Pierre told relatives about his concerns over the deterioration of security in the region, though there had been no incidents in his village.

The community leader said that when he and others advised the pastor to leave the area, he refused, saying he “would rather die for his faith than leave the community he has been serving for 40 years.”

In the last few months, more than 100 Christians have fled the area, moving farther south, more than 46 miles away. In February, armed men believed to be Islamist militants killed a church leader in the southeast region of Nohao, as he was returning from Togo.

Last Sunday’s violence in Burkina Faso that took the life of Pastor Pierre and his five congregants appears to have been the first attack, specifically on a church building, in which believers in Burkina Faso have been killed by Islamist extremists.

**Pray: for the families of the martyrs, that they will have the grace to forgive the attackers.**

**Pray: for protection of Christians facing persecution daily, around the world.**

**Pray: for the attackers to be brought to justice.**

More: <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/they-refused-to-denounce-jesus-pastor-5-others-shot-after-church-service-in-burkina-faso/?fbclid=IwAR2Ctw3mtgUNCmr8dSba8rZsqZP3N1CinNyRHQOtQ77bYGo2texbTCnK5Cc>

May 7, 2019 by Lindy Lowry

## **12 Canada: Justin Trudeau - Christians “Worst Part Of Society”**

According to a clause introduced by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pro-life Christians are barred from federal funding unless they support a woman’s right to an abortion.

“I have met Justin Trudeau three times,” said Pastor Steve Long, a Canadian Baptist minister. “Sadly my last meeting with him in his office was very disappointing. He told me that evangelical Christians were the worst part of Canadian society.”





Trudeau's enmity toward Christians is not solely against evangelicals. Canada under Trudeau has also become a very unwelcome place for Christians who flee from persecution in the Middle East.

Over 30,000 Syrian refugees were brought to Canada in an expedited manner and found themselves immediately taken care of by the Trudeau government. In the meantime, mass murder to the point of genocide of Christians has occurred within a number of Islamic nations. Trudeau has not breathed a word about the situation. Government assistance for the victims has been casual and minimal.

When questioned on his religious affiliations, Mr. Trudeau claims to be a Catholic. Yet inexplicably, his behaviour displays not an ounce of Christian identity or adherence to Christian values. It's all so strange. In fact, his behaviour toward Christianity is downright punitive. Pushing mass abortion and euthanasia. Cancelling funding for church groups. Ignoring Christian persecution within foreign nations. Running down evangelicals.

If this is the behaviour of a believing Christian, than perhaps Osama Bin Laden deserved to be appointed Pope. Is Trudeau a practising Christian. or has another religious way of life captured his imagination? Either way, the man is as mystery of a prime minister – made all the more mysterious by establishment media obfuscation of his character and personal believe system.

Perhaps the truth will be revealed once Justin is removed from office, which according to current polls, is likely to be the case come the October, 2019 election. Thank God for this.

#### **B. SALZBERG**

**Pray: for true biblical values to be restored and upheld in Canada**

**Pray: that Canada will once again be a safe and welcoming place for those fleeing persecution and seeking sanctuary**

**More:** <https://capforcanada.com/justin-trudeau-informs-minister-religious-christians-worst-part-of-society/>

## **13 EU Warns Romania Of Legal Steps Over Moves To Weaken Rule Of Law**

The European Commission has threatened it will take legal action against Romania unless it reverses moves to cripple the independence of its courts and hinder the fight against corruption.

The commission, which is the European Union's executive body, has repeatedly warned that measures adopted by the ruling Social Democrats -- including moves to reduce statutes of limitation that would close some ongoing corruption trials - are reversing years of anticorruption reforms and weakening the rule of law.



Spokesman Margaritis Schinas told a news briefing in Brussels on May 13 that Commission First Vice President Frans Timmermans had sent a warning letter to Romania's government on May 10.

"The main concerns relate to developments interfering with judicial independence and the effective fight against corruption, including the protection of financial interests of the EU and particularly to the recently adopted amendments to the Criminal Code that create a de facto impunity for crimes," Schinas said.

"Possible legislation to allow extraordinary appeals would further aggravate the rule-of-law situation," he added.

The commission has already put Hungary and Poland under a special "rule of law" framework over steps to tighten state control over the courts, media, academic institutions, and advocacy groups. This could theoretically lead to the eventual activation of the EU's Article 7 -- the so-called "nuclear option" -- resulting in a suspension of their voting rights in the EU.

Schinas said similar action would be taken against Romania unless it addressed the EU's concerns.

Schinas also signaled that Romania's becoming a member of the EU's passport-free Schengen travel area -- for which Bucharest has been pushing for years -- might not happen if the government ignored the rule-of-law concerns.

A senior EU diplomat, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said penalties could include loss of EU funds.

"The Romanian coalition government is systematically undermining the rule of law for the sole purpose of saving corrupt political leaders from prison," the diplomat said.

"If Bucharest continues on this dangerous path, taking part in the Schengen travel-free area will remain a pipe dream.

"Infringement of the rule of law will endanger the distribution of more than 30 billion euros [\$33.7 billion] in cohesion funds earmarked for Romania in the draft EU budget for the years following 2021," the diplomat told Reuters.

**Pray: That the integrity of the Romanian judicial system will be maintained.**

**Pray: That proposed legislation that undermines the rule of law will be overturned.**

**With reporting by Reuters, AFP, and RFE/RL's Romanian Service**

**More:** <https://www.rferl.org/a/eu-warns-romania-of-legal-steps-over-moves-to-weaken-rule-of-law/29938077.html?ltflags=mailer>

## 14 China: The New Normal for Christianity

A few years ago, Rob Gifford, author of *China Road: A Journey into the Future of a Rising Power*, spoke at a ChinaSource conference in Hong Kong. He talked about the economic and social challenges that were likely to force China into drastic restructuring, noting that demographics alone would require it to move from being a labor-intensive, manufacturing-based economy to something else. 'One thing is certain', Gifford said, 'the next 30 years in China cannot look like the last 30 years.'



More recently, this sentiment was echoed by China watcher Bill Bishop, who wrote in November in the Axios[2] newsletter that 'we have to accept that China under General Secretary Xi Jinping is materially different from the China we knew under Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin.'

One way that China is 'materially different' under Xi Jinping is a significantly tighter political environment. After three decades of loosening Communist Party control and expanding freedoms, Xi is systematically trying to reassert Party control over all sectors of society. This is behind so many of the reports we have seen of late of crackdowns and growing harassment/persecution of believers. However, the crackdowns are part of something much broader and it is a misinterpretation to assume that they are simply targeted at religion in general, or Christianity in particular.

This new political environment is impacting both local believers in China and foreign workers who have been serving the church in China.

### End of the era of openness

The past few decades have seen an increased openness for churches and believers.[3] The urban house church movement came into its own. Unlike the rural house church movement that had grown up during the era of intense persecution and of necessity had been 'underground', these urban house churches are often public (complete with websites) and have adopted a less confrontational stance towards the government. The goal has been to show the authorities that they are not a threat.

Even though religious regulations were not changed, enforcement was relaxed, leading to an expanded gray zone that allowed for the growth of Christian publishing, media, and education. Local officials had leeway in overseeing religious affairs in their jurisdictions, and some even cultivated relationships with church leaders. This contributed to a more relaxed environment as Christians could offer assurances of not being a threat. As long as local churches and believers did not cause trouble, they were largely left alone.

For the foreign Christian community serving in China, the past few decades have been marked by increasing openness as well. While still not being allowed to engage officially in religious work, foreign Christians could live and work in China on a variety of legitimate visa platforms. These included teaching, studying, operating registered commercial enterprises, and establishing locally-registered NGOs. Some were working independently, while others were quietly part of sending organizations. So long as their visa and residence permission papers were in order, they were operating their businesses according to local laws and regulations and were considered to be providing legitimate services to the community, their presence was tolerated.

## The 'New Normal'

The new environment, or 'New Normal'[4] as it is sometimes referred to, is making things more difficult for local believers. In 2018, the government issued a new set of religious regulations that make it significantly more difficult for unregistered churches (house churches) to function. Penalties can be levied against landlords who rent to unregistered groups, and local officials are under pressure to be stricter in their enforcement of these regulations. As a result, a few large, high-profile house churches have been closed and their leaders detained. Other larger house churches have made plans to divide (or have divided) into smaller churches should the need arise. In some ways this can be seen as Communist Party-led church multiplication.

Registered churches ('Three-self' churches) are also feeling the pressure, with more political rhetoric and directives to 'Sinicize'.[5] Many registered church leaders now have to spend more time managing their relationships with government officials, leaving less time for shepherding the flock.

**Read the full report here:** [https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2019-05/the-new-normal-for-christianity-in-china?utm\\_source=Lausanne+Movement+List&utm\\_campaign=0f41363ced-Lausanne\\_Global\\_Analysis+-May2018&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_602c1cb67d-0f41363ced-91691477](https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2019-05/the-new-normal-for-christianity-in-china?utm_source=Lausanne+Movement+List&utm_campaign=0f41363ced-Lausanne_Global_Analysis+-May2018&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_602c1cb67d-0f41363ced-91691477)

**Pray: that the doors will re-open to Christian workers and mission agencies.**

**Pray: for those being persecuted and marginalised because of their faith.**

**Pray: for protection of those 'at risk'**

## 15 Saudi Arabia to execute three Muslim scholars after Ramadan

There has been much discussion circulating about the authenticity of the three "moderate scholars" who were promoted as such by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Much feedback also came in from Jihad Watchers. Referencing al-Qouda as "moderate" drew the concern of many. For this reason, a profile of the two most controversial scholars: Sheikh Salman al-Ouda and Awad al-Qarni is included in this update.



News of the three men facing execution leaves many questions unanswered about the real reason Saudi Arabia is planning to execute them, particularly as there no freedom of speech and no freedom of the press in Saudi Arabia. As indicated below, Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman is unconvincing about his quest for modernized reform as the kingdom continues to embrace and spread Wahhabi ideology and persecute its authentic human rights activists—including the well known Raif Badawi and his sister Samar .

The most notorious of the three men slated for execution is Salman Al-Odah. This is his troubling jihadist profile and reported "change" to moderacy:

Salman Al-Odah was a known inciter of jihad terror and once referred to the late Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden as “brother”. He was also “infamous for his 1990s sermons ‘Come for Jihad’ and ‘The Industry of Death’ “and for his sermons which were spread throughout Saudi Arabia and beyond. He issued calls for his followers to perform “jihad in Afghanistan, Iraq and other occupied Muslim lands.” In 2012, Al-Odah was quoted by MEMRI as saying: “Jews use human blood for passover matzos”.

According to Arab News, Al-Odah is characterized as a “chameleon cleric”. He reportedly “took a sharp turn at the end of the decade to become a voice of the Islamic Awakening (Al-Sahwa) movement”, and lauded for his “comparatively progressive views in the Islamic world on Sharia and homosexuality.” On the 6th anniversary of 9-11, Arab News quoted him as saying openly on a TV show:

“My brother Osama, how much blood has been spilled? How many innocent people, children, elderly and women have been killed ... in the name of Al-Qaeda? Will you be happy to meet God Almighty carrying the burden of these hundreds of thousands or millions of victims on your back?”

Yet, he was still banned as a hate preacher from Denmark in 2017.

Ayed Al-Qarni

Arab News reported that the wildly popular Qarni “with 19 million Twitter followers, was banned from preaching in the 1990s and arrested over his views, but later adopted pro-government stances.” Here one can note an oddity. Saudi Arabia has been noted for its spread of salafi ideology so what was it specifically about Qarni’s views that drew the ire of the Saudi kingdom? Arab News corroborated a Gulf News report that Al-Qarni issued an apology “for his hardline interpretations of Islam and called for a more modernised Islam”, and also expressed his commitment to Mohammed bin Salman.

It is interesting to also note that Al-Qarni was scheduled to do a speaking engagement with Tariq Ramadan in December 2015, the latter who is a Muslim Brotherhood promoting, disgraced accused rapist who is funded handsomely by Qatar. But according to the Center for Security Policy, the Muslim Brotherhood political action group that hosted them “suffered a setback... when Saudi cleric Sheikh Ayed al-Qarni was denied entry into the United States.”

It would seem to be that there is much more to the executions of these men than is being revealed. One thing can be certain: dirty politics and Wahhabi oppression are features of Saudi Arabia whether or not any of these men are now “moderate”.

“Three moderate scholars will reportedly be executed in Saudi Arabia after the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The three men – Sheikh Salman al-Ouda, Awad al-Qarni and Ali al-Omari – are being held on multiple charges of terrorism.” Terrorism is the word used by jihad-sponsoring countries to cover up their misdeeds against anyone who opposes them. Amnesty International identified the men as “peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly”. They were not terrorists but opposing the Saudi regime’s oppressive sharia abuses. The Saudis executed 37 of its citizens for so-called “terrorism offences” last month.

Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman, announced that he will “return Saudi Arabia to moderate Islam” last year. There has never been a ‘moderate’ normative Islam in 1400 years to begin with, so his use of the term “return” is fallacious. Despite bin Salman’s appearance of good will, Saudi Arabia has been persecuting Koranists, cracking down on any efforts toward modernizing, jailing women for human rights advocacy and it continues to promote Wahhabi ideology globally. Saudi Arabia was also discovered to be auctioning off Yazidi sex slaves, who were captured by the Islamic State. And when it comes to the barbaric



practice of beheadings, the Islamic State has nothing over Saudi Arabia. Claiming efforts to modernize Islam in Saudi Arabia is merely a front.

They will be convicted and executed after the end of Ramadan next month, the Middle East Eye reports, citing two government sources and one of the men's relatives.

Saudi authorities have not commented on the report.

Adam Coogle, Middle East researcher at Human Rights Watch, said he could not confirm the report, but told The Independent: "What I can say is that Saudi prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against these men merely for their alleged peaceful political affiliations and opinions."

He added: "We see this as a clear departure from past practice and an indication of just how much the repression level has increased since MBS [Mohammed bin Salman] became crown prince nearly two years ago."

Mr Odah, who is known for his comparatively progressive views on Sharia (Islamic law) and homosexuality, was arrested in September 2017 after tweeting a prayer calling for reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Qatar after Riyadh launched a blockade against the emirate.

Dana Ahmed, Amnesty International's Gulf researcher, told The Independent: "The Saudi Public Prosecution's recurring calls for the death penalty in the case of a number of individuals being held for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression – including Sheikh Salman al-Ouda – raises real alarms for the fate of detained activists and religious clerics in the country.

"We're calling on the Saudi Arabian authorities to immediately release those detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, and to drop any charges against them."

**Pray: for an end to the oppressive treatment of these innocent, peaceful people.**

**Pray: for a change of heart on the part of the Saudi government.**

**Pray: that the human rights of these and other unjustly imprisoned individuals will be respected.**

More at: <https://www.jihadwatch.org/2019/05/saudi-arabia-to-execute-three-muslim-scholars-after-ramadan>

MAY 25, 2019 2:40 PM BY CHRISTINE DOUGLASS-WILLIAMS

## Resources:

## 16 The Whatcom Story Combined

Dr Jason Hubbard, Director of the Light of the World Prayer Center in Whatcom County, Washington State, USA tells us about how God is answering prayers for Community Transformation in extraordinary ways.

Their 3 fold prayer strategy involves 30 churches taking a day of prayer, once a month. Its like a prayer relay, where a church takes the baton to pray for a day, then passes the baton to the next church. This means they have ongoing, unceasing prayer.



Secondly, Godly men and women gather together in 7 strategic teams seeking the Father's will for seeing transformation taking place in their community across the seven spheres of society.

Thirdly, they have build a communications system with a prayer guide conveying specific, measurable prayer points. Alongside this, they prepare praise reports with details of answered prayers.

The result is a canopy of united, strategic, sustained prayer.

Jason tells us how 80 of the 100 local Pastors regularly gather to pray – with the outcome of deeper expressions of unity between the churches, a growing Church, impacts in the marketplace, the community, mission and much more!

Watch the video here (14:40): [https://vimeo.com/334628060?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=vimeo-cliptranscode-201504&utm\\_campaign=29220](https://vimeo.com/334628060?utm_source=email&utm_medium=vimeo-cliptranscode-201504&utm_campaign=29220)

More: [www.lowpc.org](http://www.lowpc.org)

## 17 Focus: The Power of People Group Thinking – John D Robb

Focus: The Power of People Group Thinking, a Practical Resource for Reaching the Unreached

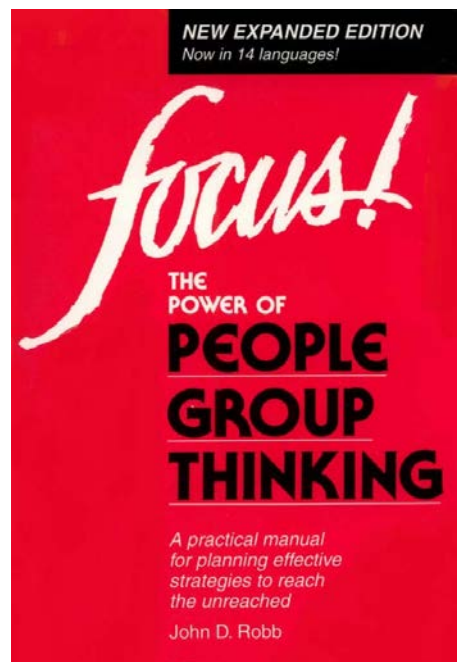
If you have a heart for prayer and mission for the fulfillment of the Great Commission, this book is written for you!

It has been put together for followers of Jesus who share His heartbeat for the peoples of the world. It is designed for you if you want to see His love, justice, and salvation begin to operate within a particular group of people for whom you are specially concerned.

If you are a missionary, an evangelist, a pastor, or a lay person who wants to better understand your target audience in order to have a greater impact, this book can help you. It will give you the tools to develop a ministry strategy that, coupled with Spirit-led prayer, will be relevant to the people you are trying to reach. Focus! will enable you to both pray and communicate the Gospel with new effectiveness and greater response. It will assist you to design ministry outreaches and programs that the Spirit of God can use to move a whole unreached group toward the salvation and social well-being He so deeply desires for them.

The author, John Robb, who serves as chairman of the IPC has devoted his life to both prayer and mission initiatives in more than 100 countries for over 50 years. Focus! went through three printings, was translated into over 20 languages, and has been used by many involved in cross-cultural missions around the world. Feel free to download it and also to share it with others who have an interest in making Christ known to those who still do not know Him.

Free Download available [HERE](#)



# 18 About International Prayer Connect (IPC)



INTERNATIONAL  
**PRAYER  
CONNECT**

### OUR VISION:

"Compelled by God to seek Christ's glory worldwide for the blessing, healing, and transforming of the nations, International Prayer Connect exists as a coalition of prayer networkers and mobilizers working together to motivate, develop and equip national movements and local churches to fill all nations with prayer for the fulfillment of the Great Commandment and the completion of the Great Commission."

### HOW WE OPERATE:

The IPC is not an organization as such. We are a fellowship of people involved in mobilizing prayer throughout the world. We function as an international "network of networks", connecting international, regional, and national prayer ministries and networks. We also arrange or support special prayer initiatives that bring prayer leaders together from time to time to pray for matters of regional and global concern to the Body of Christ. Regional prayer summits have been arranged or supported by the IPC in most regions of the world as well as international prayer initiatives for the United Nations, Hollywood, and other issues.

The IPC is led by an international leadership team, now called the International Prayer Council, is composed of twenty leaders who coordinate regional prayer networks or international prayer initiatives of various kinds. We seek to be catalysts and connectors within the global prayer movement towards the fulfillment of Habakkuk 2:14- that "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

We do not have an official membership but connect with individuals and networks through IPC Connections, a periodical newsletter distributed via e-mail to give prayer information to interested people. Please share this newsletter with prayer coordinators, prayer network leaders, and others who have an interest in the global prayer movement so that they can be informed about different prayer initiatives, existing prayer networks, and how to participate in them

## 19 Credits

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