

How Society Suppresses Christian Activity

North Korea



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- Tools: Police, spies and informants
- Arrest and “light” torture, THEN
- Re-education camp OR
- Prison camps, OR
- Execution

North Korea: Effect on Christian Activity



- Christians are primarily secret disciples
- Christians are very isolated from one another
- If you have a Bible, you don't want anyone to know
- You may keep your faith secret from even your closest relatives
- You have to seriously consider the consequences to yourself and the other person if you were to share your faith with them in any way
- Virtually all Christian activity is suppressed in national life, community life, church life, family life, and each personal life

Revelation 2:12–13 (NKJV)

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, ‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: **13** “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Afghanistan



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- Repression comes from the local community and family members
- Tribal society
- Threats, violence and torture to get a Christian to recant
- Death if they will not

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Acts 26:9–11 (NKJV)

“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **10** This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. **11** And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”

Some observations about North Korea and Afghanistan

- It's hard to imagine two societies that could be more different from each other
- These two systems of society are totally incompatible with each other
- The “causes” of Christian suppression are totally different in these two countries
- But the effect on Christian activity is EXACTLY THE SAME

“Moderate” Muslim Societies

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- Only licensed religious organizations are legal
- Conversion to Christianity from Islam is illegal

“Moderate” Islam: Effect on Christian Activity

- Many Christian personal or family-level Christian activities are unaffected
- Holding a Bible study in your home is a major disruption to the whole community
- Inviting an Muslim to church puts you and them at serious risk
- Your “protection” from Islam depends on your “submission” to whatever rules and restrictions are placed on you
- There is an element in your society pushing the nation toward Afghanistan-style treatment of Christianity

“Moderate” Communist Societies

- Government espouses “religious freedom”
- Only licensed religious organizations are legal
- State, rather than the community enforces submission



“Moderate” Communism: Effect on Christian Activity

- Many Christian personal or family-level Christian activities are unaffected
- Holding a Bible study in your home and inviting others to it has serious risks
- Inviting someone to your church service has serious risks
- Your “protection” from the government depends on your “submission” to whatever rules and restrictions are placed on you
- There is an element in the government pushing the nation toward North Korea-style treatment of Christianity

Some observations

- Even in moderate form, these two systems of society are totally incompatible with each other
- The “causes” of Christian suppression are totally different in these two systems
- But the effect on Christian activity is **NEARLY IDENTICAL**

1 Thessalonians 2:13–16 (NKJV)

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. **14** For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For **you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,** **15** who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, **16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved,** so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

1 Timothy 2:1–4 (NKJV)

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, **2** for kings and all who are in authority, **that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.** **3** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **4** who **desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

The United States

- Has more freedom than nearly any other nation
- Espouses “religious freedom”
- Sharing the truth is viewed as a “politically incorrect” attack on others freedom to believe or disbelieve
- Criticizing Islam is Islamophobia
- Criticizing sin is hate speech
- Telling someone they need Jesus is attacking their self-esteem
- Believing what the Bible says is anti-science

Effect on Christian Activity

- Many personal or family-level Christian activities are unaffected
- Many Christians refrain from religious conversations
- Many Christians refrain from holding Bible studies in their homes
- Many Christians refrain from inviting others to church services
- Your “protection” from social criticism depends on your “submission” to whatever rules and restrictions are placed on you
- There is an element in society pushing the nation toward more oppressive treatment of Christianity

What is Satan Afraid of?

- In every society, he uses whatever means will work to suppress Christian activity

Satan the Liar

Revelation 12:9 (NKJV) — 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

John 8:44 (NKJV) — 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He ... does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

What is Satan Afraid of?

- In every society, he uses whatever means will work to suppress Christian activity
 - An oppressive false religion like Islam
 - An oppressive political ideology like communism
 - The social pressure of political correctness
- He just wants Christians to remain as silent and inactive as possible!

Acts 2:41 (NKJV)

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

Romans 1:16–17 (NKJV)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Romans 10:11–17 (NKJV)

For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” **12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. **13** For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” **14** How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? **15** And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!” **16** But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?” **17** So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

What should Christians Do?

- We should actively and faithfully be doing everything Satan is trying to keep us from doing!
- Have religious conversations
- Have Bible studies in our homes
- Invite others to worship services
- Obey our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Matthew 28:19–20 (NKJV)

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Revelation 2:8–10 (NKJV)

“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: **9** “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty ... **10** Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.