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## MULTIPLYING DISCIPLE MAKERS

# Believers Under Persecution



## Persecution For Pursuing Jesus

In 2 Timothy 3:12, we learn that “everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” This truth is not meant to trigger fear, but it does require us to be wise and vigilant. It is why Ephesians 6:13 says, “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” Likewise, we are “to be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people” (Ephesians 6:18). We must pray for each other; fighting alone is not an option.

At iTEE Global, we have facilitators and students in dangerous environments. Every day in places like Myanmar, India, and Pakistan, persecution is dangerous, and life is fragile. Persecution may not be life-threatening in places like Canada or the US, but it still comes, and it still can cause trouble. In this issue, we are sharing testimonies from our students and facilitators, mostly so that you know how to better pray. Some names have been adjusted for their protection, but the Lord knows their name as we pray for them. Thank you.

## Persecution in Southeast Asia

My name is Rachel. My name is Rachel. I was born into a Christian family, but my father died of a heart attack when I was three months old. I was educated at an orphan hostel and later completed a Bachelor’s of Education.

In 2009, a private school hired me to teach, but soon, other teachers questioned my faith, claiming God has no son. They told families I would misguide their children and make anything I touched impure.

The parents asked the principal to fire me. He refused, but a few days later, he asked to see me. Parents and teachers were in his office, falsely accusing me with: “Why did you destroy our holy verses and throw them in the bin?” The principal told me to collect my belongings and go home. He called my mother and told her to get me to a secret place because the mob was plotting to kill me.

My mother sent me to the bus stop with essential belongings. “Go to your aunt’s place,” she said, which was five hours away. When I arrived at midnight, my aunt could see I was in severe mental stress. She tried to call my mother but to no avail.

Meanwhile, a massive crowd came to my family’s home, demanding to know my location. They broke down the front gates and began destroying items in our home. They hit my mother and dragged her by the hair to the floor. They beat my brother, his wife and their small children.

Later, my sister-in-law moved back to her parents’ home for six months, and my brother went to another city to find work. My mother stayed but continued to face persecution. People were now telling her that they would continue their search to rape and kill me. She contacted my aunt and urged her to arrange a marriage for me.

When my aunt’s son came for a visit—he was working as an electrical repairman in an Islamic Gulf country—he agreed to marry me. It was a quiet ceremony without family members. He was able to arrange a tourist visa for me, but he was unable to secure a permanent visa. I had to return to my home country.

My aunt didn’t allow me to enter her home because



her family had forbidden her to help me. For 45 days, I secretly stayed at a friend's home. I then could return to my husband in the Gulf country, pregnant with my first child.

In the third month of my pregnancy, my husband was fired for being a Christian. This terminated his visa. For the remaining months of my pregnancy, we lived with beggars in tents without electricity or water.

They were a loving, caring, and courageous people. For the year that we lived with them, I felt safe and happy. Sometimes, our families sent us money, which we used for medical care. We didn't have money on my delivery day, but a nearby nurse helped me deliver.

When my son was five months old, my husband acquired a new working visa. In 2014, I became pregnant again, but I had a miscarriage. It seems I had been under too much stress. I knew we could neither remain permanently in this Gulf country nor return home, where people still wanted me dead.

In 2016, a new school branch opened near us. I applied for a teaching job as an Urdu teacher—my native language—and was hired. I sent my son to their kindergarten. My husband was able to afford a shop, so we could pay the bills and help our families.

The principal advised me not to reveal my religion to any school members, but teachers had been living near my house. They knew my faith. By the third year, there was a new principal, and people started whispering against me. When my work visa expired, the school wouldn't renew it, terminating my employment.

People also refused to come to my husband's repair shop because we are Christian. We could no longer afford water or send our son to school. Worse, we couldn't return to our home country, even when my brother had a heart attack and my mother passed away. This is one of my biggest regrets.

Please pray for my family, especially my son, to have a better future and for him to spread the gospel worldwide. May God help us out of this critical situation and provide a place to worship him freely.

## Persecution in Africa

My name is Christian. I am 20 years old, and I live in Africa. I'm the firstborn, and I'm currently in grade twelve. My father is deceased.

In 2015, my parents lost their jobs, and I was in school doing grade 8. I was sent back home for not paying school fees, and I stopped attending school. My family struggled.

I began working as a shepherd and a watchman for my relatives at 14 years of age, but they refused to help me. They wouldn't even pay me for working for them.

They laughed at me because my clothes were like rags, and no one wanted me. Sometimes, we had nothing to eat. I was even thinking about committing suicide because people used to laugh at me, saying, "Ask your God to bless you."

However, I didn't give up and continued using the Doxology to praise our God, "from whom all blessings flow." Now, I'm completing secondary school, and by the grace of God, I'm doing great.

I'm studying with iTEE and praying for any vacancy to do theology study in my country so that I can serve God and bring many lives to salvation. Let us pray for one another. Persecution in

## North American

I am a facilitator who works for iTEE Global, but I also work as a substitute teacher at elementary schools. There is a mission field in our schools. I hear daily from students regarding parental

conflicts, addiction issues in their homes, and gender identity confusion.

The schools are teaching the theory that gender is a spectrum, and we need to be inclusive and disregard what the Bible teaches about gender being male and female. Staff accuse the Christians in the school of being homophobic and speak negatively about them.

I treat all students the same and believe we are to display the love of Christ to all. However, because I disagree with the masses on gender identity, I have been spoken negatively about and shunned by other staff members, creating an unfriendly work environment.

Last year, one school held a gay pride parade in the school without notifying the parents. Music was blared over the PA system that promotes a gay lifestyle. A group of students who are heterosexual walked out of the school. I spoke to the group later and asked why they walked out. The students'



answers surprised me. They said, "We walked out because there are way more heterosexual students in this school, and we don't get a special day or parade, so why should we be expected to celebrate their identity?" Later, this group of students was accused of being homophobic when, in reality, they just wanted their voices heard.

## Increasing Persecution

With each passing day, we draw one day closer to the Lord's return. As believers, we know that there will be many trials to face in the days to come. We have reported a few stories in this newsletter from students and faculty. However, there are many other stories of persecution that students were afraid to share for fear of further persecution. Students' names were changed to help protect them.

For some countries, increasing persecution of believers has already begun. According to an article in the New Indian Express, on June 14, 2024, in Cuttack, India, a bomb was hurled into a Baptist Church while members were holding a meeting around 10 pm. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has come to power again in India, and there are reports of renewed persecution there. The BJP is far right-winged, and its policies adhere to Hindutva, a

Hindu nationalist ideology, bringing great concern to Christian believers there.

On June 16, Christianpost.com reported that the Islamic State claimed responsibility for killing dozens of people in several villages in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with at least 80 Christians among the dead. One hundred fifty people have been killed since the beginning of June by the Allied Democratic Forces, according to Agence France-Press.

iTEE Global works with students in both India and the DRC. *Hebrews 10:33-34 (ESV)* reminds us,

33 sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. 34 For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

As a learning community, we need to stand alongside our students as partners, helping them to be the light in the darkness in these countries, praying for their continued safety, and preparing the way for the Lord.

## Missionary Profile: Syed



Syed was born and brought up in an orthodox Muslim family in India. His father taught him to keep all the tenets of Islam and reared him in the ways of that religion. His father brought a special Islamic teacher to teach him even on weekends.

Syed first heard about Jesus when he was 15 from

one of his schoolteachers, who had previously been a Hindu. Syed argued with her that Jesus was only a prophet and not "God."

Two years later in 1990, a family crisis caused Syed to contemplate suicide. As he began to put this thought into action, he heard the Lord Jesus calling out to him. "Syed," the Lord said. "Try me, I am Jesus." Filled with many questions, he remembered the argument he had had with his schoolteacher.

Syed went to her house that evening and was invited to church the next day since it was

Christmas. While in church, he learned that Jesus came to deliver the world from sin, shame, fear, and guilt. That very day, Syed committed his life to the Lord.

However, Syed's decision outraged those around him. In addition to the persecution, he faced from his parents, relatives, and friends—beatings and starvation—the elders of the mosque continually inflicted him with their "counseling." He faced such persecutions for many years because of his faith, but through it all, the Lord was his fortress and encouragement.

In fact, the Lord's divine strength got him through the worst of times with his parents. Once, Syed's father offered him all the wealth he had, in return for his reverting back to Islam. At another time, Syed's mother resorted to witchcraft to try to force him to recant his faith. But the Lord miraculously protected him. With Syed's mother, the encounter even caused her to turn to Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The Lord has used his background and extensive experience to equip him to reach and disciple Muslims. Despite persecution, Syed has been

faithfully ministering among Muslims for the past 30 years in various countries around the world. Half of these years have been in the Middle East, serving among the Bedouin Arabs, the nomadic tribe known for their desert travel by camel.



Syed has a bachelor's in theology and a master's degree in philosophy & religion. He specializes in the "Honor and Shame dynamics of the gospel presentation" and has travelled to many countries teaching and training. His testimony is published under the title, "Try Me, I am Jesus."

In 2020, his lungs were severely affected to the

point of near death by COVID-19, resulting in hospitalization for four months. But the Lord chose to save Him. With restricted physical health and dire lung conditions, he and his family returned to India, asking God what He wants them to do further. That is when the Lord arranged a meeting with Dr. George Law through a mutual friend. Syed has joined iTEE Global as one of the staff in India, specifically focusing on reaching and disciplining believers of Muslim background and training church and lay leaders to do the same.

He has been married to Grace (pseudonym) for 26 years and has two daughters and a son. Their youngest daughter went to be with the Lord just four years ago. Please remember them in your prayers as they continue to be faithful in ministering to the Lord and building His kingdom among Muslims.

## Prayer Points

Pray for our facilitators and students who face dire levels of persecution in their home countries. In India and Pakistan, mobs have set churches and homes on fire because of their Christian faith. Pray that God provides peace, courage, and protection.

In Myanmar, please pray for our lead facilitators, their families and our 35 iTEE University students. The facilitators and students are eager to continue, but every day gets harder as the civil war gets closer to their homes and as Buddhist leaders are causing more conflict. Please pray that facilitators can get week-long visas to be able to leave their homes and that everyone has access to the internet and adequate food to eat.

In Sierra Leone, a woman recently was throwing stones at iTEE Global students because of their faith. Police has gotten involved, and the woman's family members are asking for mercy. Please pray that God can use this situation to further the Kingdom of God as peace and forgiveness shine forth.

**Send your personal prayer requests to [pray@iteeg.org](mailto:pray@iteeg.org)**

## Ministry Opportunities

### Global Facilitator

Ever imagine serving the Lord outside North America to make an impact in someone's life? You have a passion for missions. You wish you could do more, but life circumstances have limited you from doing so. Now, you can join iTEE Global as a volunteer International Facilitator right from home. You can Facilitate cross-cultural training by volunteering 5-10 hours each week through teaching and collaboration with students in faraway countries such as India, Kenya, Cuba, Kazakhstan, or Guatemala using the internet. iTEE Global provides training and guides you in working with pastoral leaders globally.

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