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Religious persecution intensifying

By *Glendora Goodwin, glendora@tmnews.com, Times-Mail Religion Editor*
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If you were facing trial for your faith, would there be enough evidence to convict you? It's something to think about.

Suffering, persecution, martyrdom. Those words are repulsive and unpleasant. But religious persecution seems to be increasing, and several leaders predict it will greatly intensify this year.

Paul, who cited many of his sufferings in II Corinthians 11:23-27, wrote: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." - II Timothy 3:12.

Religious persecution appears in many forms - from tauntings, jeerings, harassment, social shunning and job discrimination, to actual danger, injury and even death.

"A new survey shows the majority of Americans think religion is under attack and losing influence in American life. According to American Attitudes toward Religion in the Public Square, 64 percent of 800 adults polled agreed that religion is under attack in the U.S., and 80 percent of those who identify themselves as evangelical Christians agreed. The poll also found 53 percent of respondents believe religion is 'losing influence' in American life while 35 percent said it is 'increasing influence.' Among those who think religion is losing influence, 60 percent are evangelical Christians, while 33 percent of that same group said religion is increasing in influence." - Religion Today/CNSNews.com via MissionNet

Religious persecution has been a universal problem as evidenced by the early church, which thrived amid persecution, according to the book of Acts.

"James Draper, president of the Southern Baptist's

LifeWay Christian Resources, says believers attending Chinese house churches are praying that American Christians might experience the kind of persecution they have seen in China so that it would ignite a similar revival in America.

“Draper, a prominent leader in the rapidly expanding Chinese house church movement, was asked how American Christians could pray for house churches in China. ‘Stop praying for persecution in China to end,’ he said. ‘For it’s through persecution that the church has grown...’ He said the ‘sleeping Christianity’ in North America needs a wake-up call.” - Assist News Service via MissionNet.

One example of persecution is that of Navy Chaplain Gordon Klingenschmitt, who is facing termination of a stellar 14-year career for praying “in the name of Jesus.” His commanding officer told a Navy board that Klingenschmitt “overemphasizes his own faith system, and he was talking about my sermons and prayers, and specifically cited the Chaplain School director who told him I was an immature chaplain because I pray in Jesus’ name.”

- On Dec. 2, 3,000 Muslims gathered at the Jamia Mosque in Sangia Hill and called for the elimination of Christians and the public hanging of a Christian accused of blasphemy. - Christian Solidarity Worldwide via MissionNet

- On Oct. 29, unidentified machete-wielding assailants attacked a group of girls, on their way to class at a private Christian high school in Indonesia, beheading three of them and seriously wounding a fourth, police said. - Assist News Service/Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Jesus said: “The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you...” John 15:20

And “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for their’s is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.” - Matthew 5:10-12

Times-Mail Religion Editor [Glendora Goodwin](#) welcomes comments at 277-7256 or by e-mail at glendora@tmnews.com.

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