

Be polite

We are to be respectful, even toward those who oppress.

Be brief

A short letter is as effective as a long letter. Limit the message to one side of a page. Get to the point immediately.

Be personal

Use personal examples that support your case. Reference your background, interest, training or occupation. This shows that the letter is genuine and that people from many walks of life are following events in that country. Avoid impersonal form letters.

Write neatly

A legible, handwritten letter makes an impact. Consider printing or typing it.

Write about one thing

Stick to one topic, not a long list of complaints.

Give the facts

Briefly give the background facts. Enclose relevant material to support your argument. Mention persecuted Christians by name if possible. Make it plain that Christians and others worldwide are aware of the events. Please do NOT mention VOMC. If we are mentioned, our ability to minister in certain countries may be hindered and could also put the prisoner at risk of being accused of serving as a foreign agent.

Praise where possible

Praise or thank the person/government for the things you agree on. Mention any positive connection you may have had with the country, such as a visit or studies you have carried out.

Request action

At the end of your letter, ask the recipient what they plan to do. Let them know that you expect a response; ask for a reply. Be sure to include your mailing address. If they send a vague reply, send another letter asking specifically where they stand on the issue.

FINDING NAMES AND ADDRESSES

VOM's *Doing Time for God* prisoner's list & letter writing guide contains contact information for prisoners & government officials. Download a copy at www.vomcanada.com/writeprisoner.htm.

Occasionally, we'll also include information in our FREE monthly newsletter and/or our weekly Persecution & Prayer Alert e-mail.

To receive any of these publications, contact our national office.



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LETTER WRITING

The Power of the Pen

A word in due season,
how good is it!

~ Proverbs 15:23 ~



www.vomcanada.com/write.htm

BE AN ADVOCATE!

In Hebrews 13:3, we are commanded to “remember them that are in bonds as if bound with them.” One of the most effective ways of getting involved in serving the Persecuted Church is through writing letters to, and on behalf of, Christians who are in prison for their faith.

By being an advocate, you are entering into the vital ministry of intercession and solidarity with those who suffer for their faith in Christ.

WRITING TO PRISONERS OF FAITH

When writing Christian prisoners, be encouraging and respectful. Do not discuss the political situation of their country. If possible, write short phrases or Bible verses in their language. Do not send certified mail to prisoners.

You may write the letter in English. In many restricted nations, prisoners tend to be from the ranks of the higher educated. So, even if the intended recipient cannot read your letter, he will often know fellow prisoners who can read English, and your letter will be an encouragement to the translator as well.

When you write a letter to a Christian prisoner, there is no guarantee that your letter will ever be responded to. Don't expect to have a “pen pal” relationship, but know that if the prisoner were able to respond, he/she probably would.

You may also visit www.PrisonerAlert.com, a VOM-USA website that provides an online tool that translates letters to prisoners in their own languages.

WRITING TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

VOMC has seen on numerous occasions how writing letters to government officials has resulted in the release of prisoners from such restricted nations as Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Pakistan. Often, we learn that the treatment of Christian prisoners improves when officials realize that their prisoners have not been forgotten and that they may be called to account for how they have treated them. Government officials are increasingly sensitive to international pressure.

Letters need not be long or beautifully composed. You don't have to demonstrate an awareness of complex political matters or a profound grasp of Scripture. Nor do you need to be well versed in current affairs or international law.

For your letter to make an impact, all you have to do is express your sincere concerns about suffering Christians in persecuted countries and end the letter with a plain request for action.

Tips:

If the country maintains an embassy in Canada, direct the letter there. Most embassies have staffs who translate local correspondence for forwarding to the home government. If you do



not receive a reply within a reasonable time, send a polite query.

Maintain a record of the letters you send so that you can respond properly if you get a reply.

When you do receive a reply, acknowledge it immediately as a matter of courtesy. Although state officials fail to acknowledge most of the appeals that are written to them, don't be discouraged. Governments take note of the sheer volume of letters, and they receive the repeated messages that Christian letters contain. Every letter makes an impact for the kingdom.

Write to a person

Address your letter to a person, not a government. Be sure the spelling of the name and address is correct. If the person has a title, use it. Present and former prime ministers are referred to as “The Right Honorable.” Premiers and cabinet ministers are “Honorable.” MPs, MPPs and MLAs are simply Mr., Ms., MLA or MPP.

- Heads of State, such as President – Your Excellency
- Kings, Queens and other monarchs – Your Majesty
- Prime Ministers – Dear Prime Minister
- Other Ministers – Dear Minister
- Diplomats – Your Excellency
- Judges – Your Honour