ONE VOICE

Be *inspired* by today's persecuted Christians



VOLUME 1 FEBRUARY 2025



ONE VOICE is one of the primary tools used by Voice of the Martyrs Canada to engage the Canadian Christian community and bring awareness of Christians who suffer because of their faith in Jesus Christ. VOMC's Ministry Purposes are as follows:

- 1. To encourage and empower persecuted Christians to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).
- **2.** To give practical relief and spiritual support to the families of Christian martyrs (Matthew 25:36).
- **3.** To equip persecuted Christians to love and win to Christ those opposed to the Gospel (Romans 12:14).
- To help believers rebuild their lives and Christian witness in countries where they have formerly suffered oppression (Nehemiah 1:3; 2:5).
- 5. To inform the world of the faith and courage of persecuted Christians, thereby inspiring disciples to a deeper level of commitment to Christ, His Great Commission, and the fellowship of all believers (Hebrews 13:3; Galatians 6:2).

EDITORIAL

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ONE BODY The "Church Persecuted"

By Floyd A. Brobbel CEO for Voice of the Martyrs Canada "Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body." Hebrews 13:3 ESV



While it may seem like a subtle alteration, the recent change to VOMC's "Mission Statement" profoundly reshapes our perspective on persecution:

"Actively Remembering and Serving the 'Church Persecuted'"

Though the term, "persecuted church," has been a cornerstone of VOMC's communications for many years, too often the focus was on persecution – portraying those we serve as merely victims of opposition and violence. However, it's crucial to understand that persecution isn't confined to specific regions or groups; it affects *all* who follow Christ. Therefore, we must confidently emphasize the church's unity and strength – which testify of the Holy Spirit's empowerment – rather than solely focussing on its obstacles.



I came to realize that the label, "persecuted church," can be a limiting descriptive when referring to those VOMC serves. To be sure, the challenges of the church are real, but they should not define it. Instead, the Holy Spirit actively works to prepare and embolden the church in its unwavering commitment to rise above opposition and glorify God in a world that generally resists the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Essentially, the church is called to obey and serve as God's hands, feet and mouth, ministering as Jesus Himself would if He were physically present among us. These purposeful roles also define the members of the church, unquestionably distinguishing them as "Christians"; in other words, steadfast "Christ-like" disciples of our Lord Jesus. The church, therefore, needs to be defined by members who wholeheartedly seek to glorify God by joyfully accepting life's difficulties and hardships for the privilege of proclaiming His truth to those lost in the perils of sin and death.

This truth has led VOMC's leadership team to reassess our communication strategies which are designed to promote unity within Christ's global church. As members, we willingly share in the suffering of fellow Christians, recognizing this as a spiritual act of worship and an essential aspect of our mission. When the church courageously follows Christ, accepting the suffering that comes with its faithful witness, God is able to use persecution as a potent tool for evangelism.

One of the purposes of our newly formatted and titled magazine, *One Voice*, is to encourage all of us as fellow believers here in Canada to reach out with unwavering love to others – including those who are "enemies of the cross" – while deepening our fellowship with the suffering body of Christ globally.

Remember, you are not alone in this mission, for you are a vital member of God's "church persecuted" here in Canada and around the world.

Grace and peace as you faithfully serve Him,



A Witness Among Militants



A BIGGER VISION

For years, David wanted nothing more than to become a tailor. But soon after he achieved his goal, God gave him a bigger vision. Having grown up as the son of a pastor, David suddenly felt led to attend Bible school and later minister in Burkina Faso, where the population is more than 50 percent Muslim. Initially, he resisted God's call. But then he strongly sensed that his life was ultimately in the Lord's hands. "...God is writing the end of my life," he acknowledges. "He must do what He wants with me."

SENT TO THE DESERT

During his studies at Bible school, David met and married a woman named Esther. As the couple completed their education, the violence perpetrated by militant Islamists in Burkina Faso had already claimed the lives of more than 2,000 people and displaced 1.7 million others. After graduating, ministry leaders transported David and Esther to a village in the desert. There was no structure for a church gathering or even a place for David and Esther to live. In addition, there was no cell service, and they had to walk more than six miles to collect water after a rainstorm. Even though the couple longed to share the Gospel with the nomadic Fulani people, not a single member of the community welcomed them into their home.

David and Esther lamented over their miserable living conditions and seemingly hopeless ministry prospects. "The people didn't want to hear about Christianity," David explains. "But I was encouraged by the Holy Spirit, and I had the strength to go ahead in spite of the difficulties."

Over time, David and Esther built relationships within the village community. Even though the villagers practised a syncretistic blend of Islam and witchcraft, the couple faithfully prayed for them. Having witnessed these prayers being answered, including those specifically requesting healing, the villagers were eager to learn more about Jesus and the Bible. Eventually, the church grew to include more than 20 people. "We were happy," David says. "It was a difficult...time, but we rejoiced because the people gave their lives to Jesus Christ."

A PLANNED ATTACK

The joy the couple experienced over the Fulani Muslims who had come to faith in Christ was tempered by the increasingly hostile opposition of angered Islamists in the community. One day, a member of the church came to the couple's house with alarming news. The militants were planning to kidnap David, Esther and the other believers, before taking them to a riverbank and killing them.

The couple stayed at a safer location for four days. Following this time away, David returned to the village alone. Shortly thereafter, a friend who lived near the militants brought David an urgent warning. "[My friend] told me to flee because the assailants were going to come and kill me," David recounts. Since returning to the village was considered too great a risk, the couple was eventually reassigned.

A HARDER ASSIGNMENT

In March of 2018, David and Esther started all over again in the new village. As they worked to build relationships with the villagers, the couple quickly faced harsh opposition. When a local imam learned of the couple's plans to start a church, he told Muslims at the mosque that Islam is the only religion they should follow. Some who heard his instruction warned the couple that the imam's words could lead to trouble for them. Despite the warnings, David and Esther remained in the village for nearly two years. The pastoring couple were greatly encouraged to witness 26 people placing their faith in Christ.

As villagers continued to respond to the Gospel, the militants increased their pressure. "They told us they didn't want us to do church meetings or hear our singing," David recollects. The opposing Islamists then threatened to kidnap David if he and Esther didn't comply. Other ministry leaders urged the couple to flee immediately. "I didn't want to flee, because I told people that God sent me to this village. I prayed and asked God, 'What will I do?' That night, I had a dream where someone told me, 'You must flee because your ministry is ending here.'"

THE WORK CONTINUES

After leaving the second village, David and Esther moved to a Muslim-majority area near Burkina Faso's capital. In this location, they have experienced difficulties. After two years, only eight people attend the services. Five of the believers at their church left Islam to follow Christ, and most of them came to faith as a result of God answering their prayers.

Reflecting on the numerous challenges they've encountered throughout the years, David reaffirms his strong convictions – as well as his confidence in the faith of those he and Esther have led to Christ. Whatever difficulties arise, these dedicated followers of Jesus are determined to never forsake the Lord – regardless of the cost.

PERSECUTION RESPONSE

VOMC helps those like David who have suffered persecution themselves, as well as the families of Christians imprisoned or killed because of their witness. This support assists in meeting ongoing or long-term needs like:

- Living expenses
- Vocational training
- Legal assistance

Visit vomcanada.com to learn more.

From Fear to Forgiveness

Following a devastating attack by Islamic militants, Antoni (left) and Kila (right) chose to trust in God's faithfulness. After packing his lunch for the day, Kila walked through Kalemago village, heading for the eastern slope of Mount Pohu. On that morning of May 11th, 2021, the bright sky promised good weather for the coffee harvest. At first, Kila had been reluctant to work on the farm for the harvesting of the coffee and cocoa beans. After all, it was located practically at the doorstep of a secret base for the East Indonesian Mujahideen (MIT), the country's first extremist group to swear allegiance to the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS).

Less than a year earlier, Kila and a friend had been abducted and held hostage by MIT militants – one of whom Kila recognized as a man called Qatar, who was notorious for ruthlessly beheading his victims. Upon learning that Kila was a Christian, the militants repeatedly told him to renounce his faith and join their cause. Although Kila thought he would die that day, the Islamists eventually released him and his friend.

Within a week of Kila's abduction, two other Christian farmers were abducted. This time, one of them was killed. The militants also beheaded a retired Christian military officer in an unrelated incident and brutally murdered a Christian family in a neighbouring district.

Although Kila would have typically avoided the hillside farm by staying near the village with his elderly father, he decided to join the many other Kalemago farmers who were taking advantage of the nice weather on that May morning of 2021 to work in their fields. On the way to his coffee farm, Kila stopped to chat with two neighbours. However, he learned that these neighbours – Marten Solon and Simson Susa (Marten's brother-in-law) – had already gone to work in their fields.

Simson, who usually lived with the Solon family, had been staying in a hut on his own farm because he wasn't feeling well and, therefore, couldn't hike up the hillside every day. Marten had joined Simson a few days earlier to check on him and keep him company. Like most farmers in the area, their small huts enabled them to store supplies, get some needed rest, and take cover from the rain. The farmers also kept food and bedding in the huts so they could stay on their farms during harvest season, instead of regularly trekking back and forth.

When they waved for Kila to walk towards them, fear gripped his heart as he remembered his previous abduction. Feeling certain that he would not survive a second encounter, he quickly dove into the brush....

So Kila continued on his way that May morning. Yet, shortly after passing Marten's farm, he saw something that stopped him in his tracks. Just ahead of him, five MIT militants were setting up a roadblock, and one of them was the man known as Qatar. When they waved for Kila to walk towards them, fear gripped his heart as he remembered his previous abduction. Feeling certain that he would not survive a second encounter, he quickly dove into the brush beside the road and fled across the coffee fields into the forest.

Kila spotted Marten in the distance and ran towards him. "Terrorists are coming!" he called out. "Hurry and run!" When hearing this warning, Marten immediately headed for the hut, saying, "I have to get Simson first, then I'll save myself." Kila continued to run for more than an hour, trying to avoid the main road by taking the safest alternative route back to the village. When he arrived in Kalemago, he alerted other villagers and borrowed a friend's motorbike. He first rode to the army security post, but no one was there. When he finally reached a police station, they contacted members of the military, who rushed toward Kalemago. By then, the worst had already occurred.



Accompanied by several police officers, Marten's sons rushed to the fields in search of their father and uncle. Inside the hut, they found Marten's body, which had been beheaded. Their uncle Simson's body was also recovered that day. Two other men from their village were found dead as well. Their huts had been emptied of all their supplies, and a burned motorbike lay smoldering near one of the victims.

Kila willingly stayed in police custody for a few days following the murders. "Besides questioning me about the incident," he says of the brief reprieve, "[the police] were also worried that MIT terrorists would hunt me down and kill me because I am a living witness." For months after the attack, Kila suffered from crippling fear. He couldn't eat, sleep or work, and he also developed health problems. "I no longer dared to go to my farm," he adds. "I was horrified by the memory of how those victims were massacred."

While recovering from the trauma, Kila went to live with a sister. Ministry workers provided him with food for several months. In addition, he received further comfort and support from his local church family, as well as the global body of Christ. The panic attacks and health problems he suffered after the attack have gradually decreased, and he looks forward to returning home to his father in Kalemago. "I feel grateful to God for being able to live on," he says. "I know God still has a plan for my life."

Within 18 months of the attack, all of the known members of MIT were either killed or imprisoned. While Kila was satisfied that earthly justice had been served, forgiving his attackers was far more important to him. "I have long ago forgiven them," he explains, "because in one sense...the eyes of their hearts were blinded by teachings that justify killing for the sake of a religion."

I have long ago forgiven them, he explains, because in one sense...the eyes of their hearts were blinded by teachings that justify killing for the sake of a religion.

Marten's family has likewise undergone a long process of healing from the trauma. His youngest son, Antoni, suffered guilt and regret because he argued with his father days before the murder. At the time, he had We will remain followers of Christ no matter what happens.... God has already strengthened and helped us. We believe that He will surely help us if persecution comes again.

been skipping church to be with friends, and his father admonished him not to forsake his faith by following the wrong path. "After he was gone," Antoni admits, "I realized how meaningful his wisdom was in my life. Now... my life depends completely on God. My father died, but I have a Father in heaven who loves me."

Antoni, who hopes to become a pastor, says his experience of suffering has also prepared him for a life of Christian service: "The Lord Jesus Himself was persecuted.... So, we – His disciples – will surely experience the same thing." Antoni's sister Dewi affirms, though, that even in the face of threat, they won't deny their Christian faith: "We will remain followers of Christ no matter what happens.... God has already strengthened and helped us. We believe that He will surely help us if persecution comes again."

PRAYER RESPONSE

Dear Heavenly Father,

I praise You as our all-knowing God. You overlook nothing, for all things matter to You, especially the death of Your saints and the lives of those they leave behind.

Lord, we lift up the surviving spouses of today's martyrs. May they experience Your presence through the companionship of the Holy Spirit.

Father, we lift up the children of these martyrs. May they hold no bitterness towards You or others for the loss of their parents, and may they grow into mature disciples.

Almighty God, we lift up all the disciples of the martyrs. May they continue to gather for worship and share Your "Good News" without fear. May the lives of the martyrs, who paid the ultimate price for following You, inspire us to live in fearless faith as Your obedient witnesses!

In Jesus' name, amen.

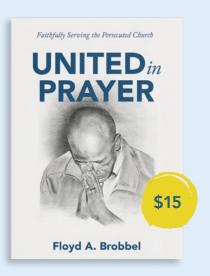
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United in Prayer by Floyd A. Brobbel

United in Prayer is a guide that inspires readers to enter into compelling and impactful prayers that will fortify and enrich the suffering body of Christ. It's often said that the smallest action can have the greatest impact – and prayer is a testament to this reality.

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Follow Me

By Rick Tozer VP of VOMC's Domestic Ministry



In today's media-driven culture, it is easy to follow someone whose viewpoints and insights inspire or entertain us. The call to follow Jesus, on the other hand, can be difficult and come with a cost.

Christ's disciples followed Him because they knew He offered words of life. His promise to those who put His words into practice was a life filled with hope and a Godordained future (Matthew 7:24). As in most cases, whenever pursuing anything worthwhile, there are challenges to be overcome. This principle certainly applied to the early followers of Christ who suffered severe persecution for walking the "Jesus way." Throughout church history, many other faithful Christians have likewise paid a price for upholding the testimony of the Gospel. Yet, even today, believers are following Jesus wholeheartedly and fearlessly, refusing to deny the truth, and it is costing them dearly.

Jesus' call to follow Him requires surrender.

The disciples Peter and Andrew heard Christ's invitation and call to repentance, and they surrendered their careers to follow Him.

"...Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers.... They were casting a net into the lake.... 'Come, follow Me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed Him" (Matthew 4:17-20 NIVUK).

When we decide to follow Jesus, we too are coming to Him in repentance, turning away from a life of sin and instead choosing to surrender the path we were travelling on to follow the way He has planned for us.

Jesus' call to follow Him requires obedience.

The word "disciple" refers to a fully devoted follower or learner. Jesus said that a follower of God is one who obeys Him by living according to His Word (John 8:31-32). Christ-followers are no longer of this world, meaning that their values, behaviours, perspectives and lifestyles all mark them as different (1 John 4:4-6; John 15:18-19; 1 Peter 4:3-4).

Jesus' call to follow Him requires service.

Following Christ requires a life of love and service to others. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus washed His disciples' feet. He humbled Himself to serve others and calls His followers to do the same (John 13:12-15).

The first disciples, along with our persecuted family today, teach us that following Christ is not a half-hearted connection we may or may not keep in our newsfeed. Following Jesus is a decision to die to our old self (sin nature) and live a whole new life – one that will last throughout all eternity!

DO YOU WANT TO FOLLOW JESUS?

"Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me." The words of Jesus in Matthew 16:24 NIVUK

The call to deny oneself does not require doing everything one can to make life as miserable as possible. Rather, it involves surrendering every desire, every impulse and every appetite that leads one away from God. It is a call to obedience and service.

- 1. Where is God calling you to die to "self"?
- 2. What do you most need to surrender?

VOM Global Reports

AFGHANISTAN

In Afghanistan, followers of Jesus cannot worship openly. As far as the Taliban is concerned, anyone who does not adhere to the teachings of Islam is considered an apostate. Christians, therefore, are at risk of being detained, tortured into divulging information about fellow believers, and possibly killed. Even apart from the Taliban, families and tribes have no tolerance for religious freedom. Although many followers of Christ have emigrated to neighbouring countries, underground house churches in Afghanistan continue to grow.



Amid the backdrop of the Taliban's oppressive rule, VOMC continues to support Pamir Ministries' radio programs, which are regularly broadcasting the Good News of Jesus, addressing relevant social issues, and teaching believers and spiritual seekers throughout Afghanistan about the Christian faith. Recently, the Pamir Ministries team built a new radio studio and produced a dramatized audio presentation of the Book of Acts in the Dari language. Our ministry partners report that due to the severe challenges of everyday life, the Afghan people are thirsty for uplifting entertainment, and this dramatized series about the early church is bringing them hope and truth in a captivating way. In fact, since airing its first radio broadcast in 1993, Pamir Ministries has produced thousands of programs that have impacted multitudes of lives throughout various countries of the Middle East.

DR CONGO

While the Democratic Republic of the Congo consists of a Christian-majority population, militant Muslim groups severely persecute believers along the nation's eastern border. One of the principal persecutors is the Islamist Allied Democratic Forces, a terrorist group that seeks to establish Islamic law throughout the region.

During one particular attack, which took place in January of the previous year, militants raided the Eglise Message du Temps church in Baeti, killing eight people and kidnapping at least 30 others – including the church's pastor and his wife. The violence has led to a massive displacement crisis in the country, and many believers are among those who have been displaced. Despite the tremendous challenges, the church remains resilient, demonstrating the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit which is effectually at work in the DR Congo through the dedicated lives of the country's remaining believers.

FEBRUARY 2025

"I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my heart." Psalm 40:8 ESV

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 BURKINA FASO Pray that God will meet the spiritual and practical needs of Christian widows who have no other means of support.
2 PAKISTAN Pray for the survivors of the September 2013 church bomb- ing that killed 81 people and injured many more.	3 TANZANIA Pray for Generosa, a Christian widow who sometimes must face the men believed to be her husband's killers.	4 YEMEN Pray for Yemeni Christians who are experiencing food shortages and economic hardships amid political unrest.	5 INDONESIA Pray that Christians will receive divine- ly appointed opport- unities to share the Gospel in their communities.	6 CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC Pray for the protect- ion of a Christian ministry worker who cares for orphans despite receiving threats.	7 SAUDI ARABIA Pray for increased access to God's Word through a creative means.	8 VIETNAM Pray that the fam- ilies of imprisoned Christians will receive God's protection and provision.
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
OMAN Pray for an increased vibrant Christian wit- ness to take place in this Muslim-majority country.	EGYPT Praise the Lord that many Egyptians are turning to faith in Christ, and that churches are growing despite persecution.	CAMEROON Pray for the comfort and healing of families who have lost loved ones due to attacks by Boko Haram.	KENYA Pray that Christians in Lamu will experi- ence God's pro- vision following the destruction of their properties by terrorists.	MALAYSIA Pray that the truth about Pastor Raymond Koh's abduction will be revealed as the investigation continues.	QATAR Praise God for Qatari Christians who faith- fully demonstrate God's compassion among their Muslim neighbours.	ISRAEL Pray that Christians in Israel will be beacons of God's hope, love and peace in a region dominated by extremism.
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
VENEZUELA Pray that first-gen- eration Christians will receive disciple- ship so they can grow spiritually.	LIBYA Pray that the instability of daily life will awaken a desire among Libyans to know the "Prince of Peace."	TUNISIA Praise God for the establishment of new churches as a result of increased religious freedoms.	BAHRAIN Praise God for a season of openness and receptivity to the Gospel among Bahrain's indigenous peoples.	ETHIOPIA Pray that Christians whose churches were destroyed by Islamic militants will experience God's love and provision.	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Pray for God's protection and guidance on behalf of the few known Emiratis who have left Islam to follow Christ.	IRAQ Pray for the roughly 300,000 Christians remaining in the country despite years of war and instability.
23	24	25	26	27	28	
BANGLADESH Pray for Juhel, an evangelist who was beaten on the street after telling others about his faith in Christ.	KYRGYZSTAN While over 90 percent of Kyrgyz people are Sunni Muslims, pray more of them will receive God's salvation.	LAOS Pray for Phomme, a believer who uses a handheld radio to share the Gospel when selling vegetables in nearby villages.	TAJIKISTAN Pray for Christian converts who have suffered persecution from family members and/or the secret police.	COMOROS Although it is illegal to leave Islam in Comoros, pray that the Gospel will spread despite extreme religious restrictions.	MALDIVES Pray for Maldivian Christians who are at risk of imprisonment or expulsion if their faith is discovered.	



SCAN TO ACCESS THE DIGITAL CALENDAR!



To Make His Name Known

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 ESV

"I am so thankful that through [your radio broadcasts], I came to know my Lord Jesus. Thank you for sharing the Gospel with our people."

~ A new believer living in an isolated region of Afghanistan.

VOMC supports Pamir Ministries' radio programs, which are regularly broadcasting the Good News of Jesus and teaching believers and spiritual seekers throughout Afghanistan about the Christian faith.

The impact is incredible!

How is God calling you to make His name known among all nations? "After listening to your radio programs, I became interested in knowing about Jesus, and [I'm] thinking about following Him. How can I get a Bible?"

~ An Afghan spiritual seeker who enthusiastically listened as a Pamir Ministries worker shared about the life of Jesus. This listener has been encouraged to download the Bible app and begin weekly Bible studies to learn more.

CONSIDER PARTNERING WITH US: onevoice@vomcanada.org | 1-888-298-6423

