

Weigh In

Weighing the facts
about Pastors

1.

Pastors in many countries endure danger because of their calling, often sacrificing comfort as they navigate stress, poverty, threats, persecution, isolation, pressure and constant risk.

2.

Pastors in persecuted nations serve as God's shepherds, quietly teaching, guiding and strengthening believers while facing surveillance, restricted gatherings, limited resources and dangerous opposition.

3.

Watchman Nee, a Chinese house church pioneer, exemplified faithful endurance under persecution. Arrested in 1952 for his faith, he remained in prison for 20 years until his death.

4.

Across history and into the present day, well-known pastors have faithfully modelled Biblical leadership, witness, courage and care. Figures like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King Jr., Richard Wurmbrand, Andrew Brunson, Wang Yi and Polycarp inspire deeper study.

Corresponding Question Points:

1. Read Luke 9:23-26. As you consider the heavy cost pastors bear, does this perspective reshape your view of what is "hard" in your own walk with Jesus? How might this move you to better care for pastors while also surrendering more fully in your own life?

2. How does knowing the challenges that pastors face – such as surveillance and restricted gatherings – change the way you value their role? In light of Hebrews 13:3, how might this prompt you to respond through faithful prayer, practical support and deeper care for those who shepherd God's people?

3. In Watchman Nee's "wordless sermon," he smashed a glass of water, crushed it into shards and silently scattered the pieces – illustrating how persecution does not destroy the church but instead multiplies its reach. What might this mean for pastors today if what appears to break the church is actually the very thing God uses to grow it?

4. As we recognize Pastor Appreciation Month in October and reflect on the weight of pastoral responsibility, how might these examples from history inspire us to intentionally pray for, encourage and bless the pastors serving among us today?

One Way

Cultural Skepticism Towards Pastors

This month, we're celebrating pastors – past and present – who go all in for Jesus. In Canada today, trust in pastors is slowly starting to...fade. When we look at other countries around the world, it's clear that this shift in trust

doesn't happen overnight. People don't go from supporting pastors to cancelling them in a single day. Instead, this loss of trust creeps in bit by bit, like a slow-changing mood that takes over a room.

The Shift

Take a look below to see how attitudes toward pastors can slowly change.

Indifference: *"Meh, I don't really care."*

At first, people aren't angry, they just tune pastors out. It's like ignoring a teacher because they think the class isn't important. They're not upset; they simply choose to not listen or engage.

Restrictions: *"Let's make rules about what pastors can say."*

As doubt and skepticism grow, people may push for new rules to control what pastors can teach or say. In Canada, bills have been introduced in government that could restrict certain Bible teachings.

This reminds us of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God gave them a clear boundary: they were not to eat the fruit (Genesis 2:16-17). However, Eve added an extra rule to His command: "We can't even touch it!" (Genesis 3:3).

Skepticism: *"Hmm...I'm not sure I trust this."*

Next, people start questioning their pastor's motives or honesty. They might think, "I can learn from anywhere," and start listening to many voices online instead of one trusted church leader. The problem with this approach is that people online are at a distance. The actions and lifestyles of online pastors are not visible, meaning their true character can't be verified. Real trust can only be established through real relationships.

Pushback: *"Pastors are a problem, let's do something about it!"*

Here, people move from caution to action – criticizing, protesting and trying to limit pastors' influence. It's like when students move beyond disliking a teacher and start to organize complaints and speak out...until suddenly, they're launching a "We need a new teacher!" campaign.

Cancel Mode: *"Shut it down."*

At the most extreme level, some people try to silence pastors completely. Yet many church leaders keep following Jesus no matter what – even when it leads to serious consequences. It's like being the only one who stands up for what's right, knowing it could cost friendships, reputation, or even personal safety. In some cases, the surrounding culture responds by trying to "cancel" them.

