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“What we need here is persecution!”

Often Christians have a glamourised view of persecution, and confidently assert that the way to revival is through persecution. After bemoaning the prayerlessness, the half-heartedness and the sinful compromises of their churches, they conclude that “persecution will purify the church.”

“Perhaps it will. It will also decimate the church and curtail its witness,” is my common reply. “Communist persecution in the USSR has failed to destroy the church, but it has succeeded in killing 60 million Russians (half of whom were Christians), and in incarcerating a further 66 million in concentration camps. Even today there are 10 million people in 1 000 concentration camps in the Soviet Union. 1 Million are there for ‘religious reasons’ alone. It is true that after over 30 years of persecution in China, the church has multiplied to over 50 million believers. But about 2 million Christians were killed, hundreds by crucifixion!”

God has worked in spite of persecution and oppression, to purify and multiply the church in China and to revive the church in Russia. But in Laos, Libya, Mongolia, Albania and Cambodia, the church has been annihilated! Persecution is no guarantee of revival — in fact God alone brings light, life and love. God alone brings salvation, victory and revival. That the church in some communist lands is experiencing revival and victory is due entirely to God and never because of persecution — in fact it is in spite of persecution.

To wish persecution on a country or a church is to say, in effect: “I think what you need is for your husband to be taken away to a concentration camp, never to be seen again, your pastor to be tortured, evangelism forbidden, your children taught to be athiests and blasphemers at school, and many of your fellow believers to be abused, assaulted, tortured and killed.”

People who wish for persecution are dangerously deluded and disgustingly deceived. Persecution is satanic blasphemy, murder, destruction and desecration. Persecution denies millions of the opportunity to hear the Gospel. Persecution damns millions to hell. Persecution is a horrific judgement on a sinful, backslidden church. (Deuteronomy 32:15-43).

Most of the great revivals of the past have taken place in religious freedom. The awakening under Jonathan Edwards, the Wesleyan revival, Finny's revival, the Welsh revivals, the Indonesian revival, the South Korean revival and so many others have occurred in religious freedom.

Why do we want God to send us persecution before we will get serious with Him, surrendering our lives to the Lordship of Christ, studying the Scriptures to discover God's Will, seeking the power of the Holy Spirit and working to evangelise this world? God can send revival to our church and our country — now — if we will turn away from evil and turn to Him (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Of course, if persecution comes we must endure it and stand firm under it with complete faithfulness to God. We must never fear persecution. But let us never seek it either.

Praise God for our religious freedom. Let us defend this precious freedom. Let us use it for more times of prayer and Bible study, worship and fellowship. Let us use our freedom to boldly evangelise our world — now.

*"Christ's message in all its richness must live in your hearts." Col 3:16*

*"Be filled with the Spirit." Eph.5: 18*

*"Pray at all times." 1 Thess.5:17*

*"Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples. . Matt.28:19*

