



April 2017 – The Invitation
Topic: Growth – Persecution
April 13, 2017

Join YWAMers around the globe in praying and hearing from God. He is inviting you!



YWAM Redding prays for the persecuted Church (YWAM Redding)

In this, the last of our three-part series on growth, we invite you to join The Invitation this month as we pray about the persecution that often comes along with growth. According to *Christianity Today* magazine, persecution of Christians continued at a high level last year: “For the third year in a row, the modern persecution of Christians worldwide has hit another record high.” YWAM’s founder, Loren Cunningham, expects more opposition in the years to come. He says “The reason I believe that persecution is going to increase on us, and I’ve already seen the signs of it, is that we are going to have a release, not just of workers but of effectiveness.”

To hear more of Loren Cunningham’s comments on how to pray about persecution, watch this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVjWs1RR14M&index=2>. (For a transcript, see the end of The Invitation.)

Recent examples of persecution of YWAM workers include a kidnapping, families expelled from

countries, one YWAM worker killed for his faith and bold witness, a YWAM worker held by militia, family members held by police, all workers from a YWAM location expelled from the country, computers and phones confiscated, home burnings of YWAM associates, burning of a church planted by a YWAM team, government harassment, imprisonment, monetary fines, beatings, hours of interrogation, and intimidation.

Loren Cunningham warns that persecution can also come by legal means such as media attacks, loss of jobs, and lawsuits against Christians. YWAM leaders also express concern over the ways governments seem to be tightening their control of, and opposition to, Christians.

Persecution is different by region and even from family to family as persecution extends to that level. One of YWAM's leaders for the Middle East notes that there are some regions currently where "we are being much more bold and active than we have been before, but getting the same or less hassle than before, but there are some areas that have become more restrictive and are continuing to tighten up."

This YWAM Middle East leader thinks YWAM has been spared significant persecution up to this point and attributes this to "possibly quite a bit of prayer cover."

As we experience growth, we will also experience greater persecution. Now is the time to 'review and count the cost' of following Jesus to the ends of the earth. God hears the cry of the poor every day and he wants us to respond, 'Here I am Lord, send me.'

Steve Goode, YWAM mercy ministry leader

In some cases, YWAM does not experience the persecution directly but we find ourselves helping others who have been or are being persecuted. Some of these examples are many YWAM locations sending teams to refugee camps that house Christians who have been persecuted in their home country. Other locations offer immediate assistance to cities, towns, and villages where Christians and new believers are persecuted.

The most recent World Watch List from the organization Open Doors predicts that the top ten countries for persecution in 2017 will be North Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen and Eritrea. YWAM has had a presence or has a presence in most of these countries.

Jesus said, "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:20). Please join us for The Invitation in April, and particularly on our prayer day April 13, as we pray about persecution.

Prepare to Pray:

- Review these Bible verses and other resources regarding the cost of following Jesus:
 - Luke 14:25-33, Romans 8:16-17, Revelation 12:11.
 - Read story of a young man, previously a Muslim, who counted the cost of following Jesus and did a DTS in YWAM, southern Nigeria. (Posted by Andy Brooks, YWAM Montana) <http://us5.campaign-archive2.com/?u=6b23479cd76e5c1ac9793ef45&id=291035c2ec>
 - Review this article and videos regarding YWAMer Dan Baumann when he was imprisoned in Iran:
<https://www.facebook.com/ywamkona/videos/1298308610198232/> ,
<http://www1.cbn.com/700club/daniel-baumann-imprisoned-iran> and
https://www.ywam.org/blog/avada_portfolio/imprisoned-in-iran-part-1-of-2-dan-baumann/ and https://www.ywam.org/blog/avada_portfolio/imprisoned-in-iran-part-2-of-2-dan-baumann/

All of a sudden I realized something, I am free! I am free! So what if they kill me. My life is bought by the blood of Jesus, my home is in Heaven. No one can take that away."

Dan Baumann, YWAM teacher and author

- As a group or individually, ask God to give you clarity on the cost of following Jesus for your specific ministries.
- As a group, note things that you can do to prepare DTS students and staff for the persecution that is expected with the anticipated YWAM growth.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulations or distress, or persecution, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:35, posted by YWAM Abuja, Nigeria

Pray about persecution that comes with growth:

- Pray for courage and protection as we make more disciples. Pray for safety for new believers as they become rooted in Christ.
- Pray for courage to bear witness when we are persecuted, imprisoned and brought to court (Luke 21:12-13). Pray that we would endure when we are persecuted (1 Corinthians 4:12).

- Pray for YWAM locations in countries known to be the worst for persecution including: North Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen, and Eritrea. Pray for more workers and disciples in these countries.
- Pray for YWAM locations that have had to leave certain areas including Syria and South Sudan due to persecution. Pray for eventual YWAM growth in these areas.
- Pray for YWAMers in the field who must remain relatively isolated for security reasons.
- Praise God for the way that He works in all things, including persecution, for the good of those who love Him and who are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).
- Pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44).



YWAM Prays for the Persecuted Church (Photos posted on Facebook by YWAM Ozarks and YWAM Worcester)

- Pray for persecuted Christians to be rescued from their persecutors (Psalm 31:15).
- Pray for the YWAM missionary kidnapped in Africa last year. Pray for his safe return, for comfort for his family and that his captors would know Jesus.
- Pray for God to create “Pauls” out of those who persecute today. Pray for God to provide them with mercy and to show them love through YWAMers and other workers.
- Pray for those who are displaced and marginalized to find safety and for YWAM workers who are ministering to them.
- Pray for loved ones of martyrs of the Christian faith to see their deceased as more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37). Pray also for practical relief and spiritual support for these families.
- Pray for YWAMers and their friends and families who are directly impacted by persecution. Pray for strength, wisdom and provision.



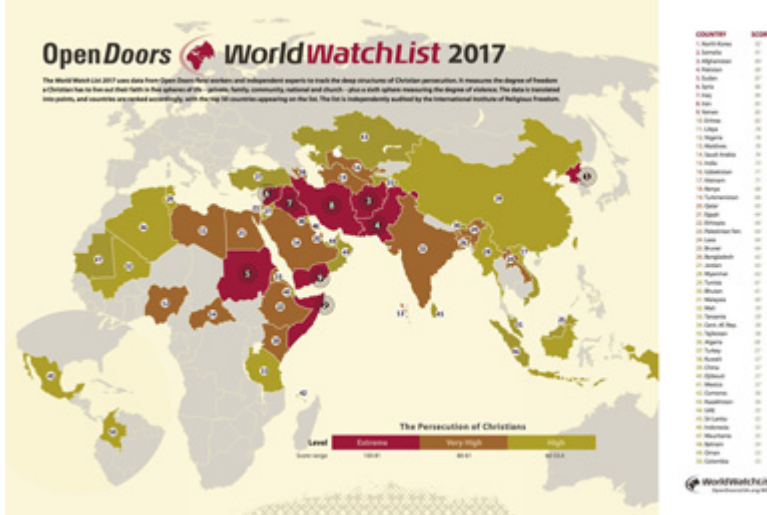
YWAM's presence in South Sudan has shifted as persecution has intensified – Sudan being one of the worst countries in the world for persecution.

Top to bottom, left to right: sharing the Gospel with refugee children on Easter morning; one of the first YWAM signs in South Sudan; teaching YWAMers in South Sudan

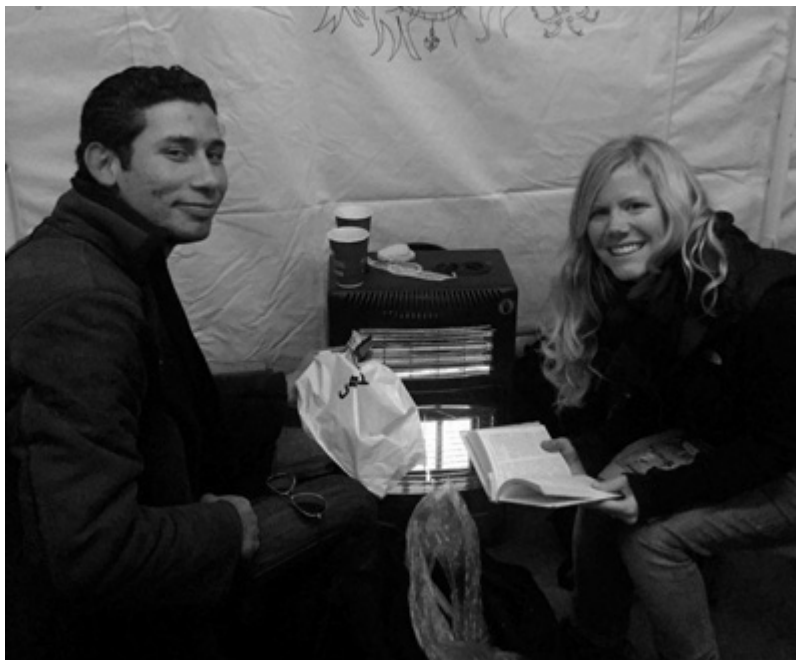
Take Action:

- Watch Loren Cunningham on growth and persecution:
 - Trees of Growth for YWAM (teaching video, 14:33 minutes, 2017): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4bcW0S5Kxc&index=3>
 - Rise of Persecution explained (6 minutes): https://www.ywam.org/blog/avada_portfolio/the-rise-of-persecution-explained-loren-cunningham/
 - On the Voice of the Martyrs Persecution Blog (<http://www.persecutionblog.com/>) see January 30, 2017 and February 7, 2017 to hear interviews with Loren Cunningham on sharing Bibles in the hardest parts of the world.
- Read books by YWAMer Dan Baumann, who was imprisoned in Iran, to see how persecution has shaped him and his teaching within YWAM:
 - *Cell 58 (Formerly Imprisoned in Iran)*
 - *A Beautiful Way*
 - *A Fresh Look at Fear*
- Track locations, stats and trends about persecution:

- o Voice of the Martyrs: http://www.persecution.com/pdfs/Global_Report_2017.pdf
- o Open Doors USA: <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/> and http://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/country_profiles.php



- Consult *Operation World* for more prayer points on the persecuted church in each country of the world. Adopt a country and pray regularly or focus on a new country each month or week.
- Review the Back To Jerusalem 2014 Persecution Report: https://www.backtojerusalem.com/report/BTJ_2014_Persecution_Report.pdf (more coming on Back To Jerusalem in The Invitation in May).



Many YWAM Locations send teams and long-term workers to minister to persecuted Christians and others who have fled to Lesbos, Greece (YWAM Honolulu)

- Read books to gain a greater understanding of persecution and the cost of following Jesus:
 - *Tomorrow You Die: "You are a traitor and traitors are shot."* (International Adventures), Reona Peterson Joly, 1996, YWAM Publishing.
 - *Singing Through The Night: Courageous Stones of Faith from Women in the Persecuted Church*, YWAM Publishing.
 - *Jesus Driven Ministry*, Ajith Fernando (See what it looks like to follow Jesus through Sri Lankan women and men who have been imprisoned for their faith.)
 - *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer.
- Remember and honor YWAMers who have gone to be with the Lord as a result of persecution or other reasons: <http://www.ywam-memorial.org/about>
- If you missed The Invitation in February or March please review these short videos about growth that were produced for The Invitation: YWAM's Lynn Green on ten-fold growth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3O43HtEvxxg>; and Loren Cunningham on global growth: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzUyW ITB1M&index=1>
- Share on [facebook.com/youthwithamission](https://www.facebook.com/youthwithamission), post a picture and add a comment about how you prayed.
- Go to twitter.com; search for [#praywithywam](https://twitter.com/#praywithywam) and tweet about your prayer time/post a picture.
- Send an email to prayer@ywam.org letting us know how you prayed and what God revealed to you.

How We Prayed

March 2017 – Growth – Global

- YWAM Togo, Kuwede Kara, Togo, West Africa received Genesis 1:11-12 regarding multiplication in the Horn of Africa and a vision of an open eye with the Lord saying "I the Lord have my eyes on you, I support you." They also prayed for growth of faith for staff and students and for ending Bible poverty.
- YWAM Perth sensed God giving them Hebrews 12:26-29, concluding that if we want to see growth and breakthrough we need to refine our character. They also prayed for the children who grow up in YWAM that they would have a heart for the Lord, and for smaller locations to have an increase of staff joining and increase in finances.
- An individual prayed that YWAM would influence youth in their spheres of influence and that professionals and scientists would aggregate their knowledge to the kingdom of God and the advancement of the gospel.
- YWAM Vijayawada, India posted on Facebook that they prayed for women's ministry growth.

Future Topics:

May 11, 2017 *Spiritual Formation*

June 8, 2017 *Back to Jerusalem*

July 13, 2017 *Two-thirds-world Workers, Financial Support*

Don't Miss The Invitation:

- Sign up for prayer updates. Go to ywam.org, find the "Stay Connected" box on the home page, put in your email address and click "Sign Up."
- Download prayer updates in a specific language. Go to ywam.org/theinvitation. (Currently available in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Indonesian, Korean or request other languages.)
- Join the conversation about how God is leading in these prayer times. Comment on the Facebook page on the second Thursday at facebook.com/youthwithamission or on Twitter [@ywam](https://twitter.com/ywam), hash tag [#praywithywam](https://twitter.com/hashtag/praywithywam).
- You can now listen to The Invitation as a podcast. To sign up or listen to past episodes, go to: ywampodcast.net/category/shows/prayer.
- If you sense God giving you a word or a direction for YWAM's prayer, please contact us: prayer@ywam.org.



Transcription:
Global Day of Prayer-Growth and Persecution
by Loren Cunningham

“Persecution is only really a result of us being effective. If we quit being fruitful, quit multiplying, quit filling the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord that wants to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, you won’t have persecution. In fact, the devil will actually say ‘good job’ but we don’t want to hear that from him. We want to hear from Jesus ‘well done thou good and faithful servant.’ ‘So as they persecuted me,’ Jesus said, ‘so they will persecute you.’ The reason I believe that persecution is going to increase on us, and I’ve already seen the signs of it, the reason is that we are going to have a release, not just of workers but of effectiveness, of fruitfulness and of multiplication, and of filling the earth. We need to plant into every Omega Zone. Plant what? Well preschools, grammar schools, high schools, the University of the Nations. But we also need to plant YWAM movement that becomes organization. A missionary movement should be started as we go into every nation on earth and as we do so were going to see the army released out in the next pioneering area. Pioneering is what it’s all about. That’s going and taking territory from Satan. ‘Oh it’s going to be bad, you’re going to get attacked.’ Yes, but ‘Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.’ So, let’s do what Jesus said. Let’s see waves of young people from everywhere going to everywhere sharing the good news, discipling people, bringing them into literally a part of the army of God that we’re a part of, and then at the same time serving those called into the other six spheres. As we do that we are going to be serving them, they will serve us, and we’re going to see something amazing in these next years. I can only say to young people look at this movie, it’s a movie of a big wave and that’s the wave you’re going to be riding—right now you’re already starting—but that wave is growing and growing into a spiritual tsunami that will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea and YWAM’s going to have a big part in it.”