Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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"Christian" Persecution

(Jerry Fite)

The term, "Christian" occurs three times in the New Testament. It denotes one who has been "persuaded" by the Gospel to be a "disciple" or learned follower of Jesus *Christ (Acts 26:28, 11:26).* The word was forged in the first- century crucible of suffering for the cause of Christ with this exhortation: *"But if a man suffer as a Christian, let hm not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (I Peter 4:16.),*

When "Christianity" began, there were no Catholic- Christians, Protestant- Christians, nor Pentecostal -Christians. Jesus foresaw and established just one spiritual *"body, the church" (Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 4:4).* The one body, comprised of "Christians," continues today, established by Jesus Christ in the first century.

The Lord's church was never to be divided up into various Denominations, for when religious division arose in the lives of man, the Lord's chosen apostle condemned it openly *(I Corinthians 1:10).* Following the New Testament standard, there are just Christians, leaving no authority for "hyphenated" Catholic, Protestant or Pentecostal Christians.

The religious mindset today is foreign to the revealed New Testament standard. Statisticians reporting world- wide "Christian persecution" conflate Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals, or any other group claiming to be "Christian" in their reporting.

In 2023, the Open Doors foundation, supporting persecuted "Christians" in the world, reported Nigeria accounts for 89% of "Christians" martyred worldwide. Brad Brandon, the head of "Across Nigeria," on a recent CBN video interview said that last year, 70% of Christian's martyred world-wide occurred in in Nigeria. He reported that 7,000 "Christians" have been killed this year.

Critics say the Nigerian government seems to have turned a blind eye to "Christians" suffering persecution. "Terrorist groups, militant herdsmen, and criminal gangs continue to target and attack religious minorities."

Last week, Allen Malone, an evangelist and member of the church of Christ experienced firsthand opposition toward Christianity in India. Morning and afternoon classes had gone well the first of the week. Evening services in two nearby villages resulted in five souls responding to the Gospel message in baptism. But suddenly, midweek, authorities arrived to *"initiate programs intended to limit the Great Commission influence."* Churches were locked up, and keys confiscated until at least Friday. Forces with volunteers were present in Dornala, even in the motel where Allen and the brethren were staying.

On Thursday, Allen reported the agents of Satan had decided to leave the area due to a heavy rainstorm, flooding roads and preventing outdoor activities. Brother Malone believed that his texts for brethren to pray for him and his fellow workers had reached heaven, and God had answered. God's providence was apparently at work as police officials in various levels of government gave brethren needed information and advice as they sought to keep the peace. God is thanked; needed evangelistic work in Southern Inda continues.

Knowing the reality of worldwide persecution of "Christians," our prayers are important and effective. We can pray for the safety of fellow-workers in Christ. We can pray specifically for workers to not be abducted or captured when the enemies of Christ enclose. We can pray for the preservation of those suffering, who are not Christians according to the Truth of the Gospel. May God spare them, and bring them in contact with New Testament Christianity.