

In 2016, it was estimated that 200,000 to 600,000 Christians had suffered some form of persecution for their faith, and the numbers have grown exponentially since.

Of the 13 countries where Christian persecution has been most severe, none have shown improvement in the past year except Saudi Arabia, where, the report says, “the situation was already so bad, it could scarcely get worse.”

Persecuted Christians from Iran to Indonesia to North Korea often feel forgotten by those in the West, especially because Western governments are not doing enough to provide them with aid. An ACN report of oppression in specific countries warns that Christians in these countries will not survive if the current violence continues.



## Billy Graham Quotes that Helped Shape World Christianity

Billy Graham was one of the most influential spiritual voices across the globe for decades. He preached to hundreds of millions of people, met with every US president since Harry Truman, spoke out for civil rights in the 1950s and '60s, and so much more. In February, the evangelist died at the age of 99. Here is a collection of his

most memorable quotes:

On sanctification: “Being a Christian is more than just an instantaneous conversion—it is a daily process whereby you grow to be more and more like Christ.”

On money: “There is nothing wrong with men possessing riches. The wrong comes when riches possess men.”

On courage: “Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened.”

On hardship: “Mountaintops are for views and inspiration, but fruit is grown in the valleys.”

On community: “Churchgoers are like coals in a fire. When they cling together, they keep the flame aglow; when they separate, they die out.”

On honesty: “Don’t ever hesitate to take to [God] whatever is on your heart. He already knows it anyway, but He doesn’t want you to bear its pain or celebrate its joy alone.”

On Bible reading: “The very practice of reading [the Bible] will have a purifying effect upon your mind and heart. Let nothing take the place of this daily exercise.”

On God’s love: “Sin is the second most powerful force in the universe, for it sent Jesus to the cross. Only one force is greater—the love of God.”

On evangelism: “The greatest form of praise is the sound of consecrated feet seeking out the lost and helpless.”

On hope: “I’ve read the last page of the Bible. It’s all going to turn out all right.”

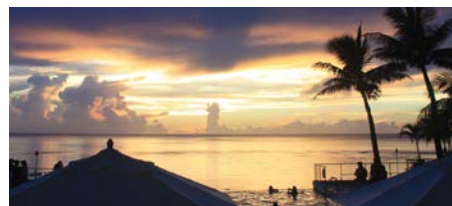
*To check out books and other church resources, please visit [www.Tyndale.com](http://www.Tyndale.com).*

## significant news for christians

Some news that’s encouraging—some disturbing. Read with discernment. Watch and pray.

# THE Church Around the WORLD

June 2018



## Country in Focus: Guam (1)

Guam—at 210 square miles and with a population of 165,000—is the largest and most southerly island of the Marianas Archipelago, situated nearly 4,000 miles west of Hawaii. More than a third of the island is used for a US military base, and nearly one-third of Guamanians are employed by the military or the government. The military presence will increase dramatically as the US base in Okinawa relocates to Guam. Tourism is a big part of the island’s economy, yet 25 percent of the population is dependent on welfare.

Prayer concerns:

- Guam is the hub of Micronesia and is very multicultural; much of the island’s spiritual growth is in the immigrant communities, primarily Chinese, Filipino, and Korean, and expatriate missionary work has focused on church planting among these communities.
- The influence of the island’s cultural and animistic traditions often impedes discipleship among believers.
- The influx of US culture, with its pros and cons, has irrevocably shaped Guam, and that influence will only intensify in the future.
- Missionary outreach from Guam to other Pacific islands has begun.
- The Prison Fellowship of Guam has a ministry to prisoners that is also penetrating the indigenous population in a small but significant way.
- Christian radio uses Guam as a base to broadcast programs to China, Cambodia, and several other countries in East Asia.

## Iraqi Christians Offer Forgiveness to ISIS (2)

Since ISIS militants took control over much of the Middle East in 2014, Iraqi Christians have faced discrimination, been forced to pay fines, been driven from their homes, and in some cases even faced death. Nevertheless, they have chosen the path of forgiveness.

“We forgive those who murdered us, who

tortured us, who raped us, who sought to destroy everything about us. We forgive them in the name of Christ,” said Iraqi archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil. “While it is true that our numbers are small, the apostles were much smaller,” he added.

So many Iraqi Christians have either been killed or displaced that leaders worry their communities will never be restored. “So few of us are left, some estimate 200,000

**All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it.**

1 CORINTHIANS 12:27

Christians or less,” Warda said of the total number of Christians in the country, which is down from 1.5 million in 2003.

In the midst of this dire situation, there are small rays of hope. Recently, the Christian ministry Open Doors began to restore nearly 700 Iraqi Christian homes that had been destroyed by ISIS.

## Sudanese Authorities Demolish Church Building <sup>(3)</sup>

Authorities in Sudan recently demolished a church building in North Khartoum, sources say. The 64 members of the evangelical church in the neighborhood of Al Haj Yousif were left with no place to worship after

officials sent a bulldozer to tear down their building without prior notice, according to one of the church’s leaders. Police on three trucks arrived at the church compound with the bulldozer just a few hours after the end of Sunday worship, the leader said.

Officials said that the church was demolished because worship created public disturbances, but Christian leaders said the building sat on land that the government is helping a Muslim business interest to seize.

Leaders of the evangelical church in Al Haj Yousif said the Muslim who claims the church property has forged documents showing ownership. They said the church has owned the property since 1989 and that a judge last year verbally confirmed its ownership.



This month you can...  
**Help Translate the Bible for  
“Impossible Language Groups”**

Some areas of Asia have never had their own translations of the Bible because it’s been too difficult for translators to get into these regions. There are many countries on the continent where persecution of Christians is fierce. These areas are volatile and can change quickly, which is why many of their language groups are considered “impossible language groups.”

“In a practical sense, these are languages that have been beyond our reach because of political, religious, and security considerations,” Bruce Smith of Wycliffe Associates shared. “Not because the languages themselves are impossible to translate, or because they didn’t need Scriptures, but because the accessibility and the security situations were

such that the timing just wasn’t available to us to reach out in that direction.”

Now at least 400 language groups in Asia are asking for Wycliffe Associates to come alongside and help them get the Bible translated into their own languages. These language groups come from at least a dozen different Asian countries.

It’s still dangerous for foreigners to travel through these areas, as they’re automatically shrouded with suspicion and oftentimes their every move is tracked. But Wycliffe Associates won’t have to send anyone in. Instead, locals will be trained for the work, allowing them to travel in and around Asia without raising alarm. These people have easier access to closed countries, also referred to as creative access

countries, than Wycliffe Associates or other foreigners could dream of in this age.

Smith says more and more Bible translation efforts are being led and accomplished by local churches. Wycliffe Associates serves these local churches by providing training and resources.

“This has been the movement of God as we’ve seen it and we believe that it’s going to have the impact in really hundreds of languages in Asia that . . . were really beyond our reach before,” Smith said.

Pray for the success of this project, for the safety of these translators, and for God’s hand to be evident throughout the translation process. For more information on how you can help, visit <https://give.wycliffe-associates.org/p-1695-mast-river-of-god.aspx>.



Church Around  
the WORLD

In its campaign to rid the country of Christianity, Sudan has designated at least 25 church buildings for destruction, claiming they were built on government lands.

## California High School Bans National Anthem <sup>(4)</sup>

“The Star-Spangled Banner” has been banned from California High School in San Ramon, California, according to the *Washington Times*. This decision was made by student leaders who deemed the national anthem racist and outdated.

“It was brought to our attention that the national anthem’s third verse is outdated and racially offensive,” student Ariyana Kermanizadeh wrote in an open letter. “We had nothing but good intentions by removing the song so that we could be fully inclusive to our student body.”

The lines in the third verse of the anthem that were deemed especially concerning say, “No refuge could save the hireling and slave/From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave.”

“We understand that this third verse is not included when the anthem is performed, but still, what does this tell us?” Kermanizadeh continued. “This song was written in 1814,” she noted. “That was written 204 years ago. Imagine all the traditions and laws that have changed . . . [and] so must our traditions.”

## Five Groups Barred from Chinese Church <sup>(5)</sup>

A sign bearing official stamps has reportedly been seen outside of a church in Zhumadian, a city in China’s central Henan province, forbidding entire demographics of people from entering. Signed by Zhumadian’s Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee, one of China’s two Communist Party-affiliated Christian organizations, the sign reads, “According to the spirit of related documents from the Party and the government, Party workers, cadres, small children, students in school, and military personnel may not enter this church to participate in religious activities.”

## Report: Christian Persecution is Worse Today

A new report claims that Christian persecution is worse today than ever before in history.

The report comes from Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), a Catholic charity that “provides pastoral and humanitarian assistance to the persecuted Church around the world.”

This increase in Christian persecution is in large part due to terrorist groups like ISIS in the Middle East and Boko Haram in Nigeria. These groups particularly target Christians.