

take the sword shall perish with the sword." As Christians we are to do all we can to pray for and to influence authorities regarding religious freedom, racial equality and social justice, but in the way of peace.

V. THE CHRISTIAN'S SUFFERING OF PERSECUTION

Our Lord not only warned us but assured us of persecution if we live and witness for Him. "If they have persecuted me," he said, "they will also persecute you." He even prophesied that men would kill us, thinking that they were doing God service. However, he told us to be faithful unto death, and that he would give us a crown of life.

In promising one hundredfold blessing for those who give up their homes, loved ones, and lands for his sake and the Gospel's, our Lord also said that these benefits would be accompanied by persecutions.

When persecution comes, one temptation is to think that we are in the wrong and out of God's will. This is not necessarily so. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were condemned for refusing to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image, and yet the Lord was not only with them in the fiery furnace but delivered them from it. We are assured that God is "a present help in trouble." In other words, the Lord expects us to endure difficulty but promises to help us in our extremity.

The blood of the martyrs is still the seed of his church. It has been stated with strong support that more Christians have given their lives for Christ in this twentieth century than ever before. This is probably a prime reason for the fact that the Gospel has been taken to more people in this century than ever before. When the Christians in Jerusalem were persecuted, they were scattered and went everywhere preaching the Word. When John Wesley was not allowed to preach in the churches, he proclaimed the Gospel in the open air; and all of Britain was shaken with a great awakening. Persecution, through God's providential overruling, can be a great means of evangelization.

Recently when a young man who had become a Christian in another country was returning home where the punishment for conversion to Christ was death, he was asked whether he was not afraid to go back. He replied, "I have already died with Christ." Absolute dedication to our Lord and his Gospel, with wisdom from the Holy Spirit, is the secret to evangelization under opposition.

EVANGELISM WHERE THERE IS GOVERNMENT HOSTILITY REPORT

Chairman: Dr. David Howard

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Three general discussion periods were held to consider Dr. J. Christy Wilson's paper on *Evangelization Oppositions*. The dialogue fell broadly into four categories:

1. Questions concerning the biblical authority and direction for Christian conduct under these conditions.
2. Individual statements of experiences and attitudes.
3. Description of conditions under which Christians work in different countries.
4. Recommended action to be taken by Christians who are free to worship to support their Christian brothers and sisters. Suggestion that this Congress might take to help the situation.

I. *Questions concerning biblical authority and Christian conduct.*

A. When a convert is made, should he be encouraged to come out openly, through baptism and witnessing, to express his new Christian faith openly? This action in a number of nations exposes the believer to persecution and even death. Those who have had to face this situation felt that biblical example indicated several possible positions for the Christian.

1. To flee. This was the action taken by some believers in both the Old and New Testaments.
2. To hide. This action is being taken by some believers today as it was in Bible accounts.
3. To remain quiet as a secret believer. This also has Scriptural antecedents.
4. To openly confess and accept the risk of torture, imprisonment, or death.

Comment was made that these options were left to the individual in the assurance that wisdom would be given by the Holy Spirit to the converts on the appropriate action they should take.

B. When should a Christian accept the teaching of Rom. 13:1-7 and submit to secular authority and when should he resist and disobey? This question was covered in Dr. Wilson's paper, but discussion expanded upon it. Acts 5:29 "...we ought to obey God rather than man," was quoted as being the proper attitude for Christians to take when secular authority and legislation violates conscience and specific biblical direction. Romans 13 was stated to be quoted by enforcement officials in the USSR when believers are questioned concerning their acts of faith and worship.

C. What should the Christian position be concerning lying when questioned by government authorities? The answer given was, "To tell a lie is always a sin. To say everything is also a sin." Reference was made to the study paper where Wilson mentioned God's com-

mand to Samuel to tell King Saul that he was going to sacrifice and not tell the whole truth that he was going to anoint David as king (I Sam. 16:2). Paul in Phil. 4:22 does not give names but writes, "All the saints greet you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." The Lord Jesus Christ broke the seal of government when he rose from the dead. Paul was let down the wall of Damascus in a basket. There are times when the believer must resist secular authority to give priority to God's law.

II. *Individual statements of experience and attitudes.* A number of Christians who had personally suffered imprisonment stated that their fellow believers wanted the Christian church to know of their sufferings. They felt the need of the prayers, love, and understanding of Christians throughout the world. God is having the victory in these nations but not without great sacrifice. Fires, arrests, beatings, imprisonments, and death are the fate of many. At times well-meaning journalists print accounts that can be harmful to Christian activity. Subject matter should be cleared with those involved before exposure to the public.

III. *The situation of Christians under national governments that are in opposition to their faith varies from country to country.* Communist opposition is not the same as opposition in some Islamic nations. In the USSR, the Christian church is divided into two groups: the registered Christian and the unregistered or underground Christians. The registered Christians are required to sign a statement accepting restrictions upon themselves concerning teaching children, witnessing, having meetings for young people, prayer meetings outside scheduled church services, and distributing literature. The underground church feels that it must not comply with these restrictions. There is no certain determination of the number of registered Christians and of the underground Christians. Some feel the distribution is about equal. Others feel there are greater numbers of registered Christians. These two groups are beginning to come together. God is working within both ranks.

IV. *What action is recommended to be taken by "free" Christians in helping their brethren?*

A. Prayer. More than anything else, our suffering brethren want and need our continuing prayers for them.

B. Radio. Christian broadcasting is of great encouragement to and a means of growth for the church in these countries.

C. Literature and Bibles are needed.

D. When a tourist is in the USSR, insist on attending a registered church. Ask to see the pastor and ask him to put you in touch with the underground church. He will not do this but it will let him know that you know of the underground church. Smile at your fellow Christians and tell them you are praying for them.

E. A resolution was passed unanimously by this group to recommend to the Congress that it pass a resolution to express its conviction

tion that all nations permit freedom of worship. Believers who are free must give this encouragement to the persecuted.

F. A motion was passed unanimously to refer to the ongoing fellowship or organization concerning the possibility of a continuing effort to secure believers' freedom of worship in all nations of the world. Prayer was given at all meetings for some individuals and for the Christians as a whole in these countries. Love and unity was sensed by those representing many nations.

Addenda: The following statement was subsequently drafted to be included as part of this summary.

Whereas: the participants in the International Congress on World Evangelization gathered in Lausanne, Switzerland in July, 1974, representing 156 countries, have studied together our obligation as Christians to fulfill the great commission given by Jesus Christ to his Church to preach the Good News of salvation to every creature in all nations, and

Whereas: the United Nations, in its universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 in Paris, article 13, has declared that "(1) everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. (2) freedom to manifest one's religion or belief,"

We call upon all nations of the world, regardless of their geographical, political, cultural, or religious standing, to guarantee, implement, and protect these stated freedoms for all peoples within their borders.

We also express our deep concern as fellow members of the body of Christ, for our brothers and sisters who are in prison or are suffering persecution for the testimony of Jesus Christ, and we promise to pray and actively work for their rightful freedom as commanded by the Word of God, "Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body (Heb. 13:3)."