

servants. Although they may seem insignificant they are the only force that will overcome “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:11, KJV).

There is a tremendous need for scientific research and faithful reporting in order to mobilize God’s army for prayer. Who would have thought that while at the beginning of this century some 30 percent of Iraq was Christian, today there is a scant 3 percent? In the whole country there is not a single national evangelical pastor! At the beginning of this century Syria was 40 percent Christian. And now, what is left of them? And what about Iran or Afghanistan?

History repeats itself. Recently a pastor in Beirut said to me, “Andrew, your being here means more than all the preaching you can do—because everybody runs away and *you* come!”

I have heard that before—in Warsaw, in Moscow, in Kampala. But, are we learning the lessons of history? Are we ready this time?

There is one hopeful sign that did not exist the first time when I heard the words, “the enemy image.” Held for many years and finally falling away is the preconception that all Russians are communists and all Arabs are terrorists. Instead of viewing them as threatening, we begin to see them as people for whom Jesus died. This development is absolutely unparalleled in history, both ancient and modern. We now see that loving our enemies changes them into friends, and that we can win them for Christ. We can now listen to their hearts as they open up.

I recently met the spiritual head of the most fanatical Muslim sect, the Hezbollah, in his headquarters in Beirut. He said, “Andrew, if only the Christians would live according to their Book, and the Muslims would live according to their Book, we would not have all these problems.”

The cry I hear in all this is, “Can we go back to our roots—to our source?” We must return to him who said, “Fear not—I am always with you. Go into all the world—I am the Way, the Truth, the Life!”

All of our statements and actions have to be based on the infallible Word of God and are, therefore, prophetic. “Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” is a prophecy and will be fulfilled—even in the Muslim world.

Then, we will anticipate change because God’s people pray, and because they will be ready to move in with all the help that is needed: personnel, Bibles, literature, and Christian education.

By doing that we will help stop the current retreat of the church in the Middle East. By “being there” we bring them the encouragement they need to accept the challenge and to endure suffering. Because “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12, KJV).

We can enter the battle prepared, because we know the spiritual warfare behind all cruelties, bloodshed, and persecution. We know and will not be astonished as John was, when he saw for the first time the revelation of the woman, “drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus” (Revelation 17:6).

“Why are you astonished?” the angel asked John. God asks the same question of us today: “Why are you amazed? Did you not understand that you should expect persecution?” All the anti-God forces in the world will join together in one last desperate war on the Lamb. Remember, the sole object of the persecution has been and will be the life of the Son of God in us.

I firmly believe that the end of the life of the church here on earth will be similar to the end of Jesus’ life on earth—on a cross, in seeming defeat. But *that* will be our greatest victory!

Whenever the message of the gospel is preached, it clashes with the religions and philosophies of the time. It inevitably results in persecution, because Jesus said, “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also” (John 15:20). If we seriously prepare to reach the world by the year 2000, we must go beyond mere slogan shouting.

1. We need to make a concentrated attack on the last remaining bastion of the countries hardly, if ever, penetrated by the gospel. Only 2 percent of the missionary force, including the tentmakers, is concentrating on the Muslim world!
2. There will be a terrific resistance. The opposition is often translated into political pressure on the sending countries, and there definitely will be a greatly accelerated pace of persecution.

Are we ready? That is the big question. In the short time remaining for us to finish the task, we will see persecution on a global scale as we have never seen before.

But this is not the end. They make war on the Lamb, but the Lamb conquers them! Jesus wins, and *we* are with him (Revelation 17:14). That is our joyful message. We have nothing to be afraid of, nothing of which to be ashamed. Everyone who is persecuted can hold his head up high and face the future, knowing that “if God is for me, who shall be against me?” And if we obey God’s calling to go into the whole world and to strengthen what remains, he will be with us until his victorious coming.

The final frontier is *not* a physical border or a forbidding cultural, political, or religious “line.” It is instead our lack of obedience to him who saved us and our lack of passion for souls! The greatest heresy is a church that does not *love*!

CHALLENGING SETTINGS TESTIMONY I

M. Y. Chan

I was imprisoned in a labor camp. The authorities thought the best way to “reform” me, to torture me, was to appoint me to empty the cesspool of human waste. All the human waste collected from the entire camp stagnated in a cesspool until it was ripe, then it was dug out and sent to the fields to be used as fertilizer.

The cesspool was very large—more than two meters in depth. It was so deep that I could not empty it on the surface of the ground, so I had to walk into the disease-ridden mass to empty it. And all the time, I had to inhale that horrible stench. My captors thought it was the best place for a Christian leader: working in the human waste pit with a shovel in my hands. But I enjoyed working in the cesspool, because I liked the solitude.

In the labor camp, all prisoners were under constant surveillance—none of us could be alone. Only when I worked in the cesspool on Saturdays, could I be alone. Then I could pray to our Lord as loudly as I wanted. I could recite the Scriptures and psalms of the Bible that I still remembered. No one would come close enough to protest!

That’s why I loved to work in the human waste cesspools. I could pray loudly and recite Scriptures. I also sang hymns as loudly as I could.

In those years, one of my favorite hymns when I worked in the pit was “In the Garden.” And when I sang this hymn in the cesspool, I understood the meaning of *garden* and I knew where God was. I met my Lord in the garden of the cesspool.