

# ASKING POINT

Network

*He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just.  
A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He. Deut. 32:4*

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## Growth and the Persecuted Church

It has been said that persecution causes the church to grow. Indeed, the church does grow in the fires of persecution, but not always in number. The reality is that the church also grows in fear, in isolation, and in compromise. Here are a few stories fresh from a North African country ravaged by persecution in the past year.

J is a carpenter, and longs to be married. Every day angry men pound at his door, demanding he take a Muslim wife. J's elderly parents and two sisters threw away his Bible and constantly threaten him. The police follow him everywhere, and recently demanded, "Are you a Christian?" "God, King and Country," he replied, giving the ambiguous traditional pledge of allegiance to his nation. He is under surveillance, now afraid to speak above a whisper in his home about the Savior he once boldly preached about. He is growing in fear and depression.

M and his wife, N, are pastors, and persecution is not new to them. M was arrested, tortured, imprisoned and starved during the nineties, but he survived and thrived. He returned and continued to preach. He and N disciple, teach, and worship quietly and resolutely. He has now been forbidden to meet with other believers, and his children are followed and harassed by police. His teenage children are not afraid, however. They have learned from their parents the power of praise, and are both talented worship leaders. Nothing stops them from worshipping Christ and leading others to do the same. In the last few months, they all began meeting again, more secretly than ever. N and M, and their little flock, will not be silenced. Their determination grows.

Days after a raid and arrest of secret believers, F declared, "Finally! Now they (the government) will know we (national Christians) are here!" Ten months later F was arrested and cruelly tortured in an attempt to extract information from him about the missionary network in the country. After his release, he met with close friends and then fled to another province. We do not know where or how he is now. Is he growing in fear, or in faith? He is like many of the underground, unknown faces in hiding. How are *they* growing in response to the recent persecution?

The church in North Africa nearly died due to persecution centuries ago when Arabs swept through, forcing conversion to Islam. Our intercession can stop that from happening again.

### **Prayer Points:**

**Pray that the national church will arise**-Isaiah 62:1-5, 10-12

**Pray that the next generation will grow in stature and leadership**-Isaiah 61:3-7

**Pray that those in hiding will know that God sees**-Genesis 16:13-14; Psalm 139:

John 10:14-15

**Pray for their encouragement to keep believing and trusting**

**Jesus**- John 14:1-4, 15-21; 15:18-19

...receive from Him  
anything we ask, because we obey  
His commands and do what pleases Him...

1 John 3:22



## Hope of the nations:

### Turkey

*“In His name the nations will put their hope.” Matthew 12:21*



#### *FAST FACTS ABOUT TURKEY*

Population: 78+ million. It is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest Muslim country.  
 Istanbul: One the world's largest cities- 12.8 million  
 President Abdullah Gul: A proponent of political Islam.  
 99% are Muslims – mostly Sunni. Secular state since 1924 Capitol – Ankara

Turkey is the largest unreached nation in the world. It's location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia makes it a country of significant importance. Given its strategic location, large economy and military strength, Turkey is a major regional power.

Turkey desires to become a full member of the European Union. In theory this would necessitate non-Muslims being allowed to establish places of worship, but because of the negative attitudes of local officials new licenses to build churches have often been refused.

“Missionary activities are still considered a national threat, despite the existence of Turkish laws that guarantee citizens the freedom to teach and propagate their faith.” (Voice of the Martyrs)

About 12 million Kurds, roughly 20% of Turkey's population, live in the southeast region of Turkey. Turkey, however, does not officially recognize Kurds as a minority group and is therefore exempted from protecting their rights. The Kurds are one of the few people groups without a homeland.

#### **Prayer requests:**

- **Pray regarding the recent earthquake, for His healing and for many to turn to Christ.** Joel 2:32
- **Believers would walk close to the Lord in boldness and in holiness as they face continued persecution.** Acts 4:29-30; 1 Thessalonians. 3:11-13
- **Pray for an end to the hostilities between the Turkish government and the Kurdish separatists with a fair resolution to the issues.** Psalm 34:12-14
- **Pray that Turkey's growing influence will be a factor for stability and peace in the Arab world and not cause further division in the Middle East. Recently they have taken up a hostile stand against Israel.** Psalm 2
- **Pray God would populate Turkey with many peacemakers.** Matthew 5:9
- **Pray for President Gul's heart to be turned toward God's purposes.** 1 Timothy 2:1-6

### International Day of Prayer: NOVEMBER 13

Christians around the world will unite on November 13 for the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Although we should always remember those in chains, IDOP is set aside as a special day to focus our prayers on the thousands of Christians around the world who are persecuted and martyred for their Christian faith.

The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church reminds us to respond to the request that we hear so often from persecuted believers — “Pray for us.” We can ask God to strengthen their faith and grant them strength and courage when they feel weak, tired or scared.

Join The Voice of the Martyrs as we unite with Christians around the world to pray for the persecuted church on November 13. If you would like to host an IDOP meeting at your church or home, you may be interested in a kit, available at [www.persecution.com/idop](http://www.persecution.com/idop).

*“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.” Hebrews 13:3*

Source: *Voice of the Martyrs*