

Yemen From a population of 30 million, there are only a few thousand Christians in Yemen. Islamic militant groups threaten Christians from a Muslim background with death, and tribes may kill or banish anybody converting to Christianity. The ongoing war, humanitarian crisis and Covid-19 pandemic in Yemen are impacting all citizens, but Christians are additionally vulnerable because emergency relief is mostly distributed through Islamic organisations and local mosques. These are believed to discriminate against anybody who is not considered to be a devout Muslim. There are accounts of Yemeni Christians being refused treatment at under-resourced hospitals.

Prayer for Yemen- 'Lord God, we pray for Your protection over Your children in Yemen. We ask that You would show them that their true identity is not in their tribe, community or nationality but, first and foremost, in Jesus. Please bring peace and stability to the country, and ensure Your children can survive the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Build a resilient church, we pray. Amen.

Myanmar Nearly 4.4 million of Myanmar's 54.8 million population are Christian. The majority religion is Buddhism. Buddhist nationalism is especially strong in Myanmar and drives much of the persecution of Christians. Converts to the Christian faith face persecution from their families and communities for leaving, or 'betraying', the system of belief they grew up in. Myanmar is also the scene of the longest civil war in the world, which began in 1948. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought added challenges, since many Christians are deliberately overlooked in the distribution of government aid.

Let's pray for Myanmar 'Lord Jesus, bring peace to the ongoing conflict impacting parts of the country, and provide ways for Christians who've been internally displaced to return home. Comfort, strengthen and heal all believers affected by violence. Thank You for the many people who've boldly given their lives to You, despite opposition from their family and local community. Help them to stand strong and grow in their faith, and may their transformation touch the lives of their loved ones. Amen.'

Syria

Syria's continuing civil war has made the country a breeding ground for Christian persecution. The unrest, which was beginning to lessen, has been exacerbated by the economic crisis caused by Covid-19.

"Covid-19 has a big impact on Qamishli [in northern Syria]; normal life is almost non-existent," Pastor George explains. "The number of poor people has increased. Especially those people who are daily labourers who, if they don't have work today, receive no wages."

Many Christians are still internally displaced or refugees in other countries because of over a decade of war and rising Islamic extremism. In northern Syria, invasion by Turkish forces in late 2019 caused greater instability, and seems to have been used by some Islamic extremists as a cover for opportunities to target Christians.

Pastor George is an Open Doors partner who, like many such partners, has stood with his church through years of conflict, persecution and difficulty. Now he is making sure that his church can be a light in the darkness: "Our church saw that now was a time to stand by the people, support them and show Jesus' love in difficult times."

Let's pray for Syria-

'Lord God, thank You that You have stood with the church in Syria throughout all the difficulties of the past decade. We pray that You will continue to show Your love to those who have suffered so much. Bring unity and joy to Christians who have had to leave their homes, and solace to those who mourn. May Syria become a country where praise for You resounds loudly. Amen.'