

Christianity, Persecution, and Prison

I fully admit that it is not easy to practice Christianity in prison much less in a life on the outside. True Christians as found in the early church would never conform to this world, their lives were led in complete devotion to Christ and demonstrating His love to the world around them. They willingly gave up their lives to treat the victims of both plague and persecution. They were secure in their position in God's will, never doubting the source of their strength and purpose. This is the reason for the lyrics: "They will know we are Christians by our love". I deeply wonder what manner of letter John would write to our modern church today.

Our church today is filled with conformism. The push to not offend anyone, to not make waves, and to not suffer anything willingly, is the overwhelming focus of many who attend church today. A majority wish to sit in the back where they are less likely to be seen and or called upon. The same motives exist here in prison. All in all, most of our church attendees today give more worship and obedience to the god of commerce than the God of all creation. So much effort has been given to growth in attendance and building size rather than growth in Christ and understanding of His word. Where has the discipline of discipleship disappeared to? So many wish to lead others to Christ through their words rather than their lives. There exists a pressure from administrative counsels to gain converts so that the coffers may be enlarged instead of training the laity to live, understand, and defend their faith from the onslaught of the world.

I know that when I was out there and going to church faithfully, that I asked **various** theological questions a little deeper than just salvation and was told that if I wanted answers to them I should go to a Bible College. This came as a shock and major disappointment to me. Why could the church not provide answers to what I considered fairly simple questions? I do thank God that I found proper training and discipling here that has and continues to afford me well. His hand over me is awe inspiring, for I can look back and see all that He has done to bring me closer to Him so that I might truly conform to His image of me and not mine. I am aware that even in here the temptations to take my eyes off Him exist so I continue to study and train in His word so that I might remain steady and ever growing.