

## **THEY CRY IN SILENCE:** A Look at the Persecution of Christians Around the World

By Elwood McQuaid

Authorities in Vietnam's Kon tum province have found a way to add cruel symbolism to their unwarranted persecution of Christians.

A pastor from an evangelical church was ordered to appear before local security police on August 20, 2003. Upon his arrival, he was forced to stand "like Christ was hung on the cross," with arms outstretched but with only one foot on the ground, from 8 until 11 A.M. When he moved to put his other foot down, he was taunted, punched, and kicked.

After he was carried away, unable to move, by an elder from his church, the authorities ordered the dismantling of the assembly he served.

In another incident, a Christian evangelist was summoned to police headquarters and ordered to renounce his faith and pastoral activities. When he refused, Vietnamese police threatened to use another "method." Calling him a "very hard-headed boy," they beat him viciously, opening a deep wound in his leg. Fortunately, a Christian brother was able to stem the bleeding and nurse him back to health.

When we read of the terrible abuse and brutality our Christian brothers and sisters endure, the critical question remains: Are we listening? And beyond that, what are we willing to do about it?

One thing we can all do is to make our concern and compassion known to those about us. Let me give you an example.

While ministering in a fine church in Virginia recently, I spoke on the persecution of Christians worldwide and the apparent indifference of many believers to this all-important subject. I was wearing my Friends of Israel “Remember” pin on my lapel and told the congregants why I was wearing it and how they could obtain complementary pins.

The response was overwhelming. It seemed that nearly every person in that service wanted to wear a “Remember” pin of his or her own. As I finished my presentation, I quoted Paul Marshall, who wrote a fine book on Christian persecution titled *Their Blood Cries Out*. Remembering the Jewish people who suffered for decades under Soviet oppression, he said,

*Years ago, I drove up Bathurst Street on my way to work in Toronto. I would pass synagogues of varying strictness, but each one had a*

*sign for the passing cars, “Remember Soviet Jews.” I did remember, since I was reminded every working day. Christians too need to be remembered. Where are the signs on the churches?<sup>1</sup>*

That’s a good question. Where are the signs on the churches? The pastor of the church in Virginia had an answer. He stood to say that the congregation he served had been negligent in remembering its brothers and sisters who are under severe persecution in other lands. “I promise you,” he said, “we will have a sign in front of our church saying, ‘Remember Suffering Christians Around the World.’”

Is that much? It may not seem so to some people. But it is a start. And I am convinced that if such signs would begin to blossom across the face of the American landscape, millions of Christians might begin to remember; and it will make a difference.

What I am asking you today is, Will you join us? It may seem like a simple gesture to wear a lapel pin or put a sign in front of a church; but I assure you, it will make a difference—if not in the eyes of the secular world, in the eyes of God. And, after all, He’s the one who matters.

#### ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup> Paul Marshall, *Their Blood Cries Out* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1997), 222.