

# Hope in Isolation

FORT ERIE, Ont. (INS)—**Hope in Isolation** is the 2020 IDOP Canada theme for this year's International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP). Romans 12:12 is the key verse: "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." It goes on to say, "Share with the Lord's people who are in need." We often think of ourselves as the ones who have something to share with those who are persecuted, but perhaps it is we, the Western Christian church, who can learn from the ability of our brothers and sisters to find Jesus, the Hope for the world, in the midst of isolating and difficult circumstances.



IDOP Canada 2020 will take place Sunday, November 1. The Canadian IDOP partners have produced quality, free downloadable resources, including a new video to help congregations, groups, and individuals pray effectively for the persecuted church. Intercede International is part of the IDOP Canada team, and has been for 16 years. Each year, Intercede International and other Canadian Christian agencies—Open Doors, Voice of the Martyrs, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and International Christian Response—work together to create a collection of resources that help Canadian Christians and churches to remember their persecuted sisters and brothers around the world, and to pray for them. IDOP 2020 resources are available now at this website: [www.idop.ca](http://www.idop.ca).

IDOP Canada encourages Canadian Christians to

consider leading their church, home group or gathering of believers in setting aside an informed time of prayer for our persecuted brothers and sisters. This year we identify in a unique way—*isolation*.

In some parts of the world, choosing to follow Christ can be dangerous, and even life-threatening. Simply practicing one's faith can lead to physical harm, loss of livelihood, arrest or even death. Persecuted believers live with the added burden of feeling isolated and cut off, possibly even from friends and family. Maybe with the small taste we have had of those kinds of restrictions with COVID-19, Canadian Christians can empathize even more with our brothers and sisters isolated and living with persecution.

These brothers and sisters have already learned to live with isolation and have a powerful message to us: There is power in HOPE, and Hope does not disappoint (Romans 5:5).

Yet, in Christ, while those who are persecuted may be isolated, they are not alone. God is indeed with them and we, the body of Christ, are also one with them. As Scripture says – "if one suffers, all suffer" (1 Corinthians 12:26).

Today, more than 260 million Christians are suffering and persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ.

Here in Canada, while our beliefs face increasing marginalization, we still enjoy the freedom to hold and live out those deeply held beliefs. Our different circumstances and our geographical location can leave us feeling separated and unsure of how to help these, our brothers and sisters.

Around the world, Christians in more than 130 countries stand in prayer with our persecuted sisters and brothers through the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) every year.

Canadian Christians can choose to set aside a whole service to focus on the issue of global Christian persecution, or a time of specific prayer for this year's focus countries (Bangladesh, Nigeria and Yemen). If they are unable to participate in IDOP Sunday on this date, IDOP encourages Christians to choose a time on another day to remember our persecuted brothers and sisters. The important thing is to pray.

**Photo:** Hope in Isolation is the 2020 IDOP Canada theme for this year's International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.