

## Way Kandis

We know so little of real persecution. Our government is founded on a document that guarantees the rights of citizens to congregate and worship, but not all of our brethren in this world share this great privilege. Such is the case of the Way Kandis congregation.

The church in Hamilton has been connected with the work in Indonesia for some time now. Barry and Melany Hatcher have worked hard in this predominately Muslim country to establish congregations of the Lord and staff them with able and sound preachers. Indonesia is a hard work.

Some time back, Lamhot Nainggolan, evangelist for the Way Kandis church, relayed some disturbing information. The property where the brethren were meeting was closed for worship. The majority Muslim neighborhood saw the church as a threat: they were growing! Islam is extremely antagonistic toward Christianity and particularly harsh toward Muslims who convert. When a follower of Muhammad denies self, takes up his cross, and follows Jesus, the “cross” takes on an entirely different meaning than what we experience in our tolerant, democratic culture. It could be their life on the line.

Imagine with me for a moment that our situations were parallel. The neighborhood you worship in sneers at you when you arrive at the church building. They consider you heretics, disloyal, and perceive your faith as a threat to their way of life. They resent your evangelistic efforts and consider them even more annoying than those occasional visits we get from the Jehovah’s Witnesses or Mormons “elders”; and they don’t even appreciate your “misguided” sincerity but instead, become angry and sometimes violent. They petition the government and one Sunday morning, you show up to worship God and find that the state has labeled you outlaws because of your beliefs. Now, what do you do?

We rarely, if ever, have to deal with reactions like these. However, for some of our brethren, this is an every day concern. They need our prayers and our support... and we need their conviction. I’m convinced that a ponderous portion of persecution served up to pious pretenders would purge the church’s platter of those petty practitioners, and Christianity would become serious business. And, more than likely, we would experience growth (Acts 8:1-4)!

I hope God, through His gracious Providence, does not see it as a necessity to providentially resort to physical trials for the church of Christ in the United States, but if we are not willing to stand as brave soldiers of the cross in the face of a little name-calling, how could we possibly bear up under physical jeopardy? Brethren, Way Kandis is a Christian light amidst Muslim darkness; they are willing to pay the price of carrying the cross! May the same be said for those of us “*in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world*” (Philippians 2:15b).