

PERSECUTION

Christianity
Practices

Persecution

Facing hostility and ill-treatment. Some Christians face punishment and death for practicing their faith.

What **Jesus said**...

What **Jesus did** ...

2021: Explain two reasons **why** Christian churches **help people who are being persecuted**. (5)

- Christian churches help those who are being persecuted because it is a **duty commanded by Jesus**.
- **Jesus helped everybody** who was in need, or outcast, such as people with leprosy and those possessed by demons. So Christian churches should help those being persecuted in any way.
- **Jesus talks** about how Christians should treat others. e.g. *visiting those in prison (sheep & goats)*. Christian churches should therefore help others who are persecuted, since that is what they would wish for themselves
- Jesus taught: **'Love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you'. So Christian churches must pray for those being persecuted throughout the world, etc.
- For some Christians, the scale of persecution of Christians is so great that it demands action to combat its different forms. E.g. **The Barnabas Fund** raises awareness of religious persecution in areas where Christians are an ethnic minority, are migrant workers, and are often victims of violence. To ignore such persecution would not be the act of a Christian church.
- If help is not given to persecuted Christians, then it is likely that persecution of all kinds will increase. Also, if Christian churches refuse to help persecuted Christians elsewhere in the world, then they might not receive help if they themselves are persecuted.
- Some will be helped simply to trust God. **They believe that there is a reason for the persecution** believe that things will turn out to be for the best in the end.
- Christians believe that they are united by faith. So this must include giving help to persecuted members of the faith.
- Freedom is a basic human right. Therefore, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) works internationally to uphold the right to freedom of religion and freedom from persecution.
- Some try to help the persecuted Christians get out of the country. Send practical help e.g. food, money etc, to help them carry on living and **put pressure on international bodies** to help bring an end to the persecution.

'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for **theirs is the kingdom of heaven**. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because **great is your reward** in heaven, for **in the same way they persecuted** the prophets who were before you.' *Matthew 5:10-12*

'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'
Romans 5:10

How the church responds

Some will be taught to react with **forgiveness** and love / so they might decide to **love their enemies**.

Some will be encouraged to **respond to large-scale persecution**. **Open Doors**, which **supports persecuted Christians worldwide** / the **Barnabas Fund** helps Christians cope with discrimination and persecution.

Some might be helped to be pacifist (because they believe that Jesus commanded it), so **follow Jesus' example**.

Some will be encouraged to **pray**, to **read the Bible**, to **contribute financially** to help persecuted people. They may **support charities** and **pressure groups** resisting persecution, etc

Some will be helped simply to **trust God** / believe that there is a **reason** for the persecution / believe that things will turn out to be **for the best in the end**.

Spec 2: Give two ways in which Christian churches respond to persecution. (2)

2019: Give two ways in which the Church helps Christians to respond to persecution