

February 5, 2017



FIRST CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

WELCOME to First Christian Assembly, an independent church whose mission is articulated by Jesus in Mark 16:15 when he said "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". Following this great commission, First Christian Assembly preaches and teaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. In so doing, we trust that God, working through His Holy Spirit will draw souls to salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Watch and Pray

Europe's terror attacks. The assassination of Russia's ambassador to Turkey. The Brexit. The Zika virus. 2016 was a year of memorable and sometimes troubling headlines....It's the primary focus of the 2017 World Watch List: a ranking of the world's 50 worst places to be a Christian. "Persecution is increasing overall throughout the world. We're seeing it particularly in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa," says [Open Doors rep] Fuentes.

This is the third consecutive year that persecution has noticeably risen, making the trend especially noteworthy. The uptick of violence perpetrated by radical Islam was one of the largest contributing factors. In 2013, Christians living in "failed states" - countries in which "social and political structures have collapsed to the point where the government has little or no control" - experienced very high levels of persecution. The collapse of infrastructure in these nations resulted in increased pressure on believers.

As noted here, 2014 brought "historic levels" of persecution upon the Christian community. Africa saw the fastest growth, moving three nations into the top 10 for the first time: Sudan, Eritrea, and Nigeria. ISIS attacks in the Middle East triggered a mass exodus of Christian refugees. The trend continued in 2015, with persecution exceeding even the historic levels of 2014. Christian oppression rose on every continent. Islamic extremism continued to be the primary driving force behind the expansion of persecution, with its rise being the lead generator of persecution for 35 out of the 50 nations on the list.

"Even though persecution is horrific in places like Iraq, Syria, Somalia, there's no country that quite has the restrictions, violence, or targeting of Christians like North Korea," observes Fuentes. "No other place on earth is like North Korea in the number of Christians persecuted, the number of Christians killed. The very act of owning a Bible could get you killed on the spot."

It's no surprise that North Korea will top the 2017 World Watch List. Fuentes says 2016 was the hermit nation's 14th year as the world's top persecutor of Christians. In November, human rights advocates discovered a new political labor camp near Pyongyang. Christians are usually sent to camps like these when their faith is discovered, and the conditions are equivalent to the Holocaust's death camps.

What YOU can do about it...."The number one thing is to be praying for the countries on the World Watch List," says Fuentes. (Hearth, "2017 World Watch List reveals troubling trends," Mission Network News Online, 12/30/16) - Excerpts

Ministry Highlights

Missionaries

John Koehler-Afghanistan

Dear Friends... Well it has been quite a month since the last newsletter!

First I have to give thanks to God and thanks to you for your prayers!

By God's sovereign grace I survived being in the wrong place at the wrong time! I happened to be driving the Land Cruiser... when the second of two suicide bombs went off in Kabul about three weeks back. Myself and one of my volunteers were actually about 10 meters from the second explosion. I saw the flash and then all of the windows were blown out of the vehicle but amazingly both of us came away with just some scratches! Just as we passed by the location, we were at the one place in the street where four pine trees had grown together. These trees, providentially planted too close together, shielded us from and absorbed much of the blast.

Unfortunately, many others were less fortunate, with over 30 killed and another 100 hundred wounded. It was quite an intense experience but both myself and my volunteer feel God spared us because He has raised us up to reach the men under the bridge!

Pray for peace in Afghanistan!

(See back page for prayer requests.)

(FCA) First Christian Assembly, 1900 S. 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148
 (PAC) Philadelphia Access Center, 1832 S. 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19148

215-389-6721
 215-389-1985

The Philadelphia Access Center is a ministry of First Christian Assembly. Our mission is *revealing Christ through compassionate service*. Services available at PAC include social services information and referrals, biblical counseling, support groups, volunteer training, and community outreach. All services are free of charge and available to anyone. To learn more, visit us in person (across the street from FCA) or online at www.philaccess.org or www.facebook.com/philaccess.

WEEKLY SERVICES /MEETINGS

	FCA	PAC
Sunday	9:45 AM <i>Bible Study</i> 11:00 AM <i>Worship Service & Children's Sunday School</i>	
Monday		7:00 PM <i>Stepping Stones</i>
Tuesday	6:30 PM <i>Prayer (Sanctuary)</i> 7:00 PM <i>Worship (Sanctuary)</i>	
Wednesday	6:30 PM <i>Men's Fraternity (on a hiatus)</i>	1:00 PM <i>Women at the Well</i> 1:00 PM <i>Coram Deo</i>
Thursday		6:00 PM <i>Prayer Service</i> 7:00 PM <i>Bible Study</i>
Friday		7:00 PM <i>Right Path (on a hiatus)</i>

- *Coram Deo*: A men's Bible study and Christian fellowship.
- *Right Path*: A Christ centered support and recovery group for people whose lives have been affected by drug and alcohol addiction. In a warm and friendly atmosphere, we provide loving support and fellowship; in genuine confidential sharing, coupled with a Biblical twelve step model of recovery.
- *Stepping Stones*: A Christ centered support group for men and women impacted by a loved one's addiction. In a warm and friendly atmosphere, we provide loving support, fellowship, confidential sharing, and intercessory prayer.
- *Women at the Well*: This group is Biblically based and promotes hope, healing, and fellowship for women impacted and struggling with brokenness.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Ministries (present and future) at First Christian Assembly and the Philadelphia Access Center
- Christians around the world being persecuted for their faith
- Our supported missionaries
- For our Pastor and his family
- Our country and God's will for it

John Koehler – Prayer Requests *(The newsletter was dated 1/27, but the requests should still be prayed over.)*

- Another praise, we start renting the...house, the one we have been praying for, this coming Tuesday! But keep praying as we will have a house but with absolutely nothing in it...not even one spoon!
- Also, pray as I will be presenting the project to government officials to get their approval for an MOU this coming week. We are attempting a very different approach to rehabilitation so please pray for favour.
- We also hope to be sending one of our volunteers to India for a six-week internship with Betel, a powerful followers rehabilitation program in Delhi. Pray that he is granted a visa this Sunday and that he goes, is encouraged, challenged and trained to help the men here.