

The LandBetween

MINISTRIES

The mission of the LandBetween Ministries is to equip leaders to fulfill Christ's Great Commission of heart-focused discipleship in a broken world.

NEWSLETTER

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WAR & FAMILY

THE TIME FOR WAR?

On January 3, 2020, President Trump ordered a drone strike in Iraq that killed Iranian General Qassem Soleimani and others.

Today, January 7, 2020, at least fifty-six Iranians were killed in a stampede that took place on what was to be Soleimani's last funeral day.

Death. Anger. Chaos. Questions.

Will this be the time Iran gets bombed into oblivion, as certain power brokers have wanted for decades? Will Iran pull out some of its 'surprises' on US forces or Israel? Or, will there be a few "tit-for-tat" skirmishes and then things settle down?

THE DECEPTION WILL GO ON

I'm not banking on things settling down, but one thing is certain: Deception from various fronts will continue.

For example, Masih Alinejad, an Iranian journalist with *Voice of America*, has faced numerous death threats for reporting on Iran's regime.

Alinejad wrote a recent article, "*Don't Believe Iranian Propaganda about the mourning for Soleimani.*" She reports Iranians telling her that although Soleimani had hard-liner support, the government has forced students and officials to attend the funerals. Iranians are telling her that school children are being forced to write essays honoring the late General. If they cannot

write, they are expected to cry. She then references a Reuters report that over 1,500 Iranians were killed by Iranian forces this past November (2019) who were protesting against the current regime. Due to not wanting public shame, or further protests, the government allegedly forced the families of the dead to agree to not have public funerals. Unless the families agreed to not have a public funeral, the government would not release their loved ones' bodies. It was like pouring salt on a wound. Evil tyrants, even liberal American professors, go to great lengths to kill the truth from



being exposed. Truth sets people free (John 8:32), but Satan wants people, regardless of their financial wealth, to have poor hearts by believing lies.

One of the greatest lies coming out of China, Iran, and many other nations, are their constitutions that claim religious freedom for Christians.

Open Doors, an international ministry founded by Brother Andrew, has a "World Watch List" of fifty countries where persecution against Christians is the greatest. North Korea is ranked the worst in how it treats Christians,

but many others nations are, in reality, not much better in civil discourse. Whether in Asia, the Middle East, or wherever Christians are persecuted, both police and citizens are rewarded for the amount of innocent Christians they report and have arrested...all based on lies. Truth does not matter to these leaders because they hate Jesus.

Open Doors ranks Iran in the "extreme" category of persecution against Christians, which means it is one of the worst nations in the world in this regard. Based on numerous testimonies and reports I have studied over the years, the prisons, for both male and female believers in Christ, can be worse than horrific.

In spite of this pain, as I wrote last month, the truth is that tens of thousands of Iranians are coming to faith in Jesus Christ in a real and powerful way. Whether through satellite TV, radio or other means, the Gospel and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is bringing new life, hope, and love to a land that has suffered much.

There are Iranians who know the truth, regardless of what the West or those in the media may say. Many are older now, but there are Iranians who remember the 1970s and before when women could wear what they wanted and when things may not have been perfect but there were more freedoms.

JESUS SAYS THEY ARE FAMILY

I remember in the 1970s being neighbors with people from places like Egypt, Iraq, Iran, and many other...

...nations. Most of them came to America lost and without Christ. For many years, the apartment complexes on campus we lived in while my Dad was earning his doctorate, we were the only Americans in the entire complex. I am thankful for that upbringing, as most of my friends had recently moved to America from other nations. I did not know anything different other than a multicultural experience every day.

Since I was surrounded by people from so many different places, their culture was more like a blur and, without knowing it, I saw people not in their nation of origin but in who they were inside.

One of the main reasons I chose ministry work is because of the transformed hearts I saw when neighbors from places like Iran and Iraq would come to faith in Jesus. I remember seeing the "before" when they were lost in lies and then the "after" of when they were like before they knew Jesus and what they were like afterward. Unlike seeing people once a week in church, I could see their dramatic change on a daily basis. Their expressions of worry, anger, and emptiness would change to that of a peace and calmness that is indescribable (Philippians 4:7).

The other thing I remember is their sincere hunger for the Word of God. Unlike cultural Christians who might read the Bible here and there when they felt like it, these believers were passionate about the truth and how Jesus could continue to change their lives. They were so thankful to be out of the darkness they could not wait to find out more of God's Truth so they could do more of the Father's will.

These believers lived out Matt. 7:21... Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord, will enter the king-

dom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of the Father in Heaven will enter."

These new believers became family, as Jesus describes His true family:

"For whoever does the will of my Father in Heaven is my brother and sister and mother!" — Matthew 12:50.

Are we to pray for the lost? Of course. But, let us also know that in places like Iran and Iraq, there are members of our true spiritual family in dire need of prayer this side of Heaven.

A few years ago, I reached out and found a Vietnam War veteran who



was a few yards away from my Uncle John when he was killed in combat. I wrote about him (here) in May '17.

The Vietnam War veteran said he shared things with me about Vietnam he had never told his own family. Why? Because since I was a nephew of his fellow Marine, one who died in combat near him, he said I was in the family. Because of being in the family, he was willing to share. As is true with many combat veterans, the memories of Vietnam were still fresh, raw, and difficult to share, even more than fifty years after the war. It was an honor for me to just listen as this veteran poured out his heart for about an hour straight. I was able to learn for the first time, with corroboration from other veterans, more of what happened to my Uncle in Vietnam.

Family. According to Jesus, the family

that is going to last is not one made up of legal documents or shared physical DNA. True family are those who do not simply go to church and say they are Christians. The true family actually does the will of the Father in Heaven no matter what a culture says. Many people in churches, from the UK to the USA, are bowing their will to the culture instead of Christ and they are in for a rude awakening in eternity.

DEMONS ARE NOT APPEASED

There are those who believe that Jesus went to the cross to appease an angry Father. No, Jesus was not on the cross in the hands of an angry Father trying to appease Him. Jesus was on the cross by the hands of angry *sinners*, as He was doing the will of a *loving* Father. It was love, not appeasement of anger, that motivated Jesus.

It may sound strange, but the truth is that every year in America, countless chickens are sacrificed to appease evil spirits. If the testimonies are true, more than just chickens are sacrificed. All in the name of appeasement or trying to find power or to control others. There is a power in evil, but no power can match that of Jesus Christ. On the cross, Jesus did not appease anything, He *crushed* the Serpent's head, in fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. Spiritually, those in Christ will never receive the sting of death from the Serpents' teeth filled with hellish venom. Jesus *won* the *victory* over sin and death (1 Cor. 15:55-57). Those who try to appease evil or pain through sinful vices will lose. Jesus died and rose again so you can leave sin and join His true family.

"...and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." — 2 Cor. 6:18.