

Iranian Church among the fastest growing



Iran (MNN) ? The Church in Iran is one of the fastest growing churches in the world. It's a stat that's been supported by missiologists, Christian researchers, and other Christian workers in the region.

Why the Growth

Rex Rogers with SAT-7, a Christian satellite television ministry in the Middle East and North Africa, says there are three things happening in Iran that's sparking the Church growth.

Hedonism: A lot of Iranians are hurting spiritually and emotionally. This pain has resulted in drug and alcohol abuse. In the midst of the pain, though, these people are also looking for something to bring life to their lives.

Zoroastrianism: Zoroastrianism is a pre-Islamic religion related to Persia. Iran's history with Persia, and the answer found in the religion, attracts Iranians.

Church Growth: Because people are hurting and looking for answers, the Church is growing. This undoubtedly sparks even more growth in the region as new Christians seek to share their faith in Christ.

?People are looking for answers. You know ISIS is an Arab world problem. Still, Iranians are aware of it and they see ISIS people, or other extreme groups like that, killing each other in the name of their common god and it doesn't make any sense to them,? Rogers explains.

?And they see their own government using religion as a tool to power. Anybody under 35 years of age over there, that's all they've ever seen. Back to 1979 and the [Islamic] Revolution.?

However, this experience with Islam has caused Iranians to take a step back and say, ?Hey, what else is out there?' And while what's happened and continues to happen in Iran is not good, God is using it to show people his love, grace, and salvation.

Persecution, Restriction, Rebirth

Yet, Iranians actually have very little access to Christian resources. Churches have to stay in the shadows, [though historical Christian churches](#) are granted some limited freedoms. Still, it is forbidden for Christians to evangelize to individuals of Muslim backgrounds. Christians are treated like second-class citizens and Muslims who convert to Christianity face even harsher persecution.

There's risk for Christian converts, which can vary by region. Believing in Christ can mean losing a job, losing a spouse and/or family members, even being beaten, imprisoned, and harassed.

But despite this risk, persecution, and the little access Iranians have to Christian resources in the country?the Church is present.

?Now it's the secret Church, it's the hidden Church. It's house churches. It's a lot of strong and intelligent women who are leading those churches. Men, too, but more women who are educated and have the ability,? Rogers shares.

?They sing in whispers and they do incredible things and they tune into SAT-7 PARS because that's where they get discipleship.

That's where they get teaching. That's where they get fellowship and encouragement.?

Help the Church

But what does it mean to be a hidden church? Well, it involves strategy and not drawing attention to where the church is meeting. For example, this can mean arriving at the church location at different times or parking a few blocks away and walking to the place or home.

?The Christian people in Iran and the rest of the Middle East, too, are amazingly resilient and strong,? Rogers says. ?Their convictions, their commitment puts us, I think sometimes, to shame.?

So please, pray for these Christians. Pray they'd be able to have fellowship with one another, they'd be able to get access to copies of the Bible, and for the growth of their faith.

Another way to help the Iranian Church is by giving to SAT-7 to help fund the satellite TV programming. All it costs is \$1 to provide satellite TV to a single person in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Source: Mission Network News