

Interview With Brother Andrew

by Brother Andrew

The church must step up its efforts to evangelize Muslims and strengthen the local church in the face of increasing persecution and attacks in the Muslim world.

Scripture: Luke 9:43

Topics: "Christ's Majesty", "Spiritual Witness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher delves into the concept of 'Eyewitnesses' (epoptes), emphasizing the importance of close and careful inspection of the majesty of the Lord. Drawing from William Barclay's insights, the preacher explains how believers are privileged eye-witnesses of the sufferings of Christ, akin to initiates in the Mystery Religions. The term 'Megaleiotetos' is explored, highlighting the splendor and divine majesty of Christ, particularly evident at His transfiguration as described in 2 Peter 1:17.

Transcript

by Open Doors

OD: How do you feel the world has changed since September 11?

Andrew: During the "good old days" of communism, everybody knew who the "enemy" was. It's no longer so.

OD: How has it changed for Christians living in the Muslim world?

Andrew: Definitely for the worst. Christians are paying the price for how Muslim fundamentalists perceive the "Christian West." They already had a persecution complex and see us as perpetrators. They can't get at us easily. They can, however, get at the local and national Christians.

OD: And there's no political solution?

Andrew: The so-called worldwide coalition that's been put together to fight terrorism includes a lot of countries where there's a lot of persecution. It limits what we can do politically to fight persecution. Temporarily, I hope. I saw the same pattern under communism. The moment you sting communism, then the communists in power put the pressure back on the church because globally the church is still identified with Western missionaries in most of these countries. In the Middle East it's even more risky because they factor in Israel and they know that many churches, though not all, back Israel. Therefore the church

becomes the enemy of Islam.

OD: What countries have degenerated the most for Christians because of the September 11 events?

Andrew: In some ways it's general. But Pakistan, Indonesia and Nigeria have all had confirmed reports of attacks directly related to September 11 and the U.S. response.

OD: What can we do?

Andrew: One, we must step up our efforts to evangelize the Muslims. There is a general decrease in missions giving toward the Muslim World, which is very much self-defeating. Second, we must reach out to the Christians in these places, just as we've always done, to "strengthen what remains" (Rev. 3:2) -- even in a place like Bethlehem. Christians are leaving because there is no future in the West Bank. But there is still something that remains; now we must go in and strengthen it. How else will either Jew or Arab or Muslim know who Jesus is? Open Doors is a mission, and proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of God is the only solution -- not politics, not military power, not revolution.

OD: Are you seeing this strengthening and proclamation take place?

Andrew: Not in the Muslim world at the moment because the trend is still the other way. But we have seen it in the past in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. One of the reasons for the downfall of communism was the strength of the church in which we and many others had a part. The opportunity is there in the Muslim World, but it's not happening yet.

OD: Why not?

Andrew: One reason is the constant pressure the church faces. There's little hope for improvement in the near future and it's disheartening. Ultimately, though, the church is going to play a decisive role. I really believe that.

OD: So strengthening the church in the Muslim world is of utmost importance.

Andrew: Absolutely. Again, they compare unfavorably with the communist world because in every country in the communist world there was a church. But a number of Muslim countries never had a church, so we have a lot of catch-up to do.

OD: Is there no functioning church in Afghanistan?

Andrew: Officially there's still no church because the new regime is still hard-line. They haven't solved the other problems yet with all those warlords and all those factions that are still fighting each other. We must simply pray that there will be enough peace for missionaries to establish churches. And when I say missionaries, I don't mean Westerners, but Christians from the region.

OD: What breaks your heart the most?

Andrew: That Muslims are so open to us and yet there are so few who use the opportunity. They want the message of love and reconciliation, forgiveness, hope, that God is love. I see the people, I see the children. So much slavery. So much poverty. And yet so much hunger for the Word of God. Let's go there and not worry about the danger; otherwise it makes it more dangerous for the whole world.

OD: Like Jesus?

Andrew: Jesus went around doing good. He looked for the lost. I pray we will have the same attitude and inspire the regional churches -- inspire the Pakistani Christians to go into Afghanistan. What is our plan? Are we doing something haphazardly and hope it will work out all right? We must be strategic, build bridges and have the courage to cross over the bridge, to fight the good fight. It's a Scriptural work. We need strategy, we need leaders, we need followers, we need donors, and we need people with dedication. The only battle that is lost is the battle that you give up. I will not give up. I see openings, I see possibilities. I still maintain that everyone who is reachable is winnable. And everyone is reachable, so why don't we win them? It can be done.

OD: But you always emphasized the spiritual aspect of this "war."

Andrew: Absolutely. But it is not just general prayer, "Lord, send missions to the Muslim World." We need to develop a plan of action to first get through to the church. That is what God told me 50 years ago and that has not changed. We must go to the church and encourage them, supply them, ask what they need -- not what we prescribe, what they need.

OD: What are believers asking for in the Muslim World?

Andrew: They don't just ask for Bibles. They ask for fellowship, for understanding. We're for Jesus and we seek our brethren. That has not changed and the need for that is more urgent now than ever before.

OD: Does the church in the Muslim World feel forgotten by Christians in the West?

Andrew: Very much. We don't want to go where it costs so much. We're easygoing, fun-loving Christians, and we don't like the smell of the gunpowder. We'd rather go to a nice convention and hear famous speakers and listen to famous singers and be entertained, but that is not the Christian life.

OD: How do you pray for the persecuted Christians?

Andrew: First, by identifying myself with the Persecuted Church. I want to be part of that; I want to feel their pain and feel their joy. The thing we have forgotten is that there is terrible pain -- the poverty and the discrimination and all the fathers in prison and the people blown up in churches. It happens in all these countries -- China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, India, and Pakistan -- and practically all the other countries from Indonesia to Morocco. I identify with them so the Lord can search me to pray for specific needs that come to my desk every day. Sometimes I cry, sometimes I don't know how to pray. But I'm always saying, "Lord, I'm willing to go there."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/brother-andrew/interview-with-brother-andrew/>

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