**Christians ‘Under Caesar’s Sword’**

**Responding to Worldwide Persecution**

By: Eric Metaxas|Published: November 17, 2016 6:00 AM

There’s an important new documentary that highlights how Christians are responding to persecution around the globe. <http://www.breakpoint.org/bpcommentaries/entry/13/30119>

Listen Now | [Download](http://www.breakpoint.org/images/content/breakpoint/audio/2016/111716_BP.mp3)http://www.breakpoint.org/bpcommentaries/entry/13/30119

One hundred years ago, one-third of the population of Istanbul, formerly known as Constantinople, was non-Muslim. It was home to hundreds of thousands of Jews and Christians.

Today, Istanbul, the largest city of the modern state of Turkey, is less than one percent non-Muslim.

This did not happen by accident. What’s more, the same forces that turned one of Christianity’s great cities into a virtual Christian-free zone is still at work throughout the world.

These processes and possible Christian responses to them are the subject of an important new project, “Under Caesar’s Sword,” and a short documentary by the same name.

The project is a joint effort of the University of Notre Dame and the Religious Freedom Center of the Berkley Center at Georgetown University. The goal of the “three-year, collaborative global research project” is to investigate “how Christian communities respond when their religious freedom is severely violated.”

Note that I said “when” not “if” their religious freedom is severely violated. As the project’s website tells visitors, “today Christians constitute by far the most widely persecuted religion.” It cites a study by The International Society for Human Rights, which states that Christians are “the victims of 80 percent of all acts of religious discrimination in the world.” Christians are also “the only religious group that is persecuted in all 16 of the countries highlighted as egregious offenders by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom in 2012.”

All told, a Pew Research Center found “that between June 2006 and December 2012, Christians faced harassment and intimidation in 151 countries, the largest number of any religious group.”

If you’re a regular BreakPoint listener, some of these dismal numbers should be familiar to you. What won’t be as familiar are the faces and voices behind the numbers. Nor will the localities featured in the 26-minute documentary.

The stories told by “Under Caesar’s Sword” take place not in ISIS-controlled Syria or Iraq, but in Turkey and India, two ostensibly non-sectarian democracies. In India, Christians who’ve been harassed or worse by their Hindu nationalist neighbors, have to file complaints at police stations festooned with Hindu idols covered in garlands and other offerings. Not exactly the stuff confidence in the legal system is made of.

In Turkish-controlled areas of Cyprus, all evidence of that island’s rich Christian heritage, which began with Paul’s companion Barnabas (check out Acts 4), is being systematically eradicated.

As the film tells us, “Everyone agrees that we’re seeing religious cleansing, ethnic cleansing on a massive scale” in parts of the world.

So how are Christians responding? As an Indian Christian leaders says in the film, “The ﬁrst response [to the harassment and persecution] is prayer . . . We do not retaliate, we do not respond as possibly other communities would do.”

It’s not only Indian Christians who have foresworn retaliation. As Daniel Philpott of Notre Dame noted, this is, with very few exceptions, the standard Christian response to persecution, harassment, and humiliation.

What’s more, Christians have not only foresworn retaliation, they are reaching out to their non-Christian neighbors in the hope that these neighbors will see them as fellow Indians or fellow Turks and understand the deep roots of Christianity in those countries.

This important effort deserves our support. Come to BreakPoint.org to view the documentary and to learn more about our brethren living under Caesar’s sword.