

# The Land of the Free

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By Christine Anderson

*From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. (Luke 12:48b)*

We have each received many gifts from God. I think when we talk about being held accountable for the use of our gifts we automatically think of the talents and spiritual gifts that we have. That isn't wrong; of course, we will be held accountable for the way we use those gifts - but is that it?

With Memorial Day fast approaching, I can't help but think of another gift we have received from God - the gift of freedom. In the United States we enjoy freedoms that most of the world only dreams about. Why has God allowed us to be free and not everyone? Is it possible that He has given this gift to us because He wants us to use it in ministry to others, just like every other gift He has given? Do you think it is possible we have been given the gift of freedom so we can help those who don't have freedom? Do you believe that one day we will stand before our Creator and we will give an account for how we used the gifts He gave us – including the gift of freedom?

About two years ago I began learning about the persecuted church. I stumbled upon it when I purchased a book online and I could receive a free magazine from The Voice of the Martyrs during the check out process. I'm embarrassed to say that I had no idea what was going on in other countries. I had no idea the amount of persecution that our brothers and sisters in Christ face. Did you know that approximately 163,000 Christians are martyred every year for their faith? EVERY YEAR! Their stories of faithfulness have completely changed the way I think about being a Christian. It has also completely changed my view of the freedom that we, as Americans, take for granted on a daily basis.

In the United States going to church isn't a big deal. We don't risk our lives going to church. We don't put our children's lives in danger because we believe in Jesus. People go to church in this country just because it is something they have always done, not necessarily because they want to worship Jesus Christ. We get impatient with our pastors when their sermons go a little too long because we have other things we want to be doing on Sundays. We choose churches based on the type of music played and, forgive me, but we leave churches over things as silly as the color of the carpet.

Do you know there is a church in Southeast Asia where the members have to remove glass and manure from the ground, left there by people who hate Christians, before they can start their church service?

Let's be honest, would you keep going to church if you first had to remove manure from the place where you'd be sitting?

We are blessed to live in the "land of the free and the home of the brave." Brave men and women gave their lives so we could live in a free country. But what are we doing with that freedom? Are we "using our freedom to indulge the sinful nature" (Gal 5:13) or are we using our freedom to act on behalf of the poor, the widows, the orphans, the persecuted and the abused?

We always have a choice, but when God gives us a gift - He's going to ask how we used it.

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To learn more about the persecuted church and to discover ways to help, please visit the Voice of the Martyrs website at [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com).

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